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Ah! she was a pretty picture just then. (Page 139.)

Anna C. Taylor
THE HUNTINGDONS:
Christmas 1865-

OR.

GLIMPSES OF INNER LIFE.

BY

MARIA LOUISE HAYWARD,

AUTHOR OF "THE CAVERLY FAMILY."



BOSTON:

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 CORNHILL.

1865.

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THE HUNTINGDONS:

OR,

GLIMPSES OF INNER LIFE.

MRS. LIVINGSTON was alone. Five minutes since hasty footsteps had passed through the hall, a nervous hand had closed quickly the outside door, and the sound of a horse's rapid footsteps had followed immediately after. Mrs. Livingston had listened eagerly to each one of these movements, and as the last faint step came to her ear, she sank into an easy chair and folding both hands full over her face, she remained motionless and silent. All was silent around, save the low ticking of the French clock on the mantel, and all remained silent for a long while, till the flutter and stir of a canary in its cage startled Mrs. Livingston, and gazing up she said,

“My poor bird what has frightened thee.”

Then arising, apparently occupied with another thought, she passed slowly to the end window, and was just lifting the curtain, when suddenly she let it fall, saying half aloud,

“What matters it, he is nothing to me now, and must never be.”

During that long time she had been communing with her own heart. Rapidly had thought carried her back to a few months previous, when she had first met him, whose departure had now caused her such deep sadness, and dwelling upon that meeting and the many events which had transpired since, she tasted anew their sweetness, but only to render her present feelings more bitter, more painful. With the feeling that he had indeed gone from her, gone forever, she had stepped to the window to ascertain if he had left the village, for from her windows she could easily see across “the harbor” the village hotel, and the very windows of the room he had occupied during the past weeks. Many nights had she watched the long lasting lights which shone from those windows, but now she felt to look was all in vain, and dreading, too, to know the certainty of her feeling, she dropped the curtain and murmured the words above, then, turning round, gazed here and there for some familiar object, something which had not “gone” written upon it. Her eye fell upon the

Bible, and as she turned its sacred leaves over, a few pages arrested her attention, and seeing there the deeper "gone," gone of father, mother, sister and a dearly loved husband, the fountain of her heart was opened, and tears — those great relievers of human misery — came to calm her troubled spirit. Then again went memory back into the past, and as the old sorrows arose from their ashes, the new one lost its sudden bitterness, for amongst past memories the Comforter divine appeared, and whispered, "Fear not, for I am with thee," "Cast thy burden on me for I will sustain thee." And Hope sweetly added, "Why should'st thou doubt? Has he not carried thee through far heavier griefs, and will he not through this? Fear not, but only trust," and, leaning on this trust the saddened face grew brighter, and the tearful eyes were upward lifted, while the sorrowing one whispered "Father, thy will be done."

Day followed day, and Mrs. Livingston still trusted, still waited, praying for earnest work in God's vineyard, work that would not recall the past nor give opportunity for painful thought.

The prayer was granted, for soon after, one warm October eve, while walking up and down the piazza, she was surprised by a visit from her brother, Mr. Huntingdon, a merchant from an adjoining city.

"I have come," said he to her, advancing and clasping her proffered hand in his, "to beg a favor of you, and one which I shall be very unwilling to have you refuse."

"Well, what is it?" quickly returned Mrs. L——.

"You probably know," replied Mr. Huntingdon, in a saddened tone, "that we have given up all hopes of Margaret's recovery. Dr. Stetson was in yesterday, and said the only thing now he could recommend for her, was a trip South, and therefore I am determined to start immediately for Florida, and"—

"And you have come for me to take charge of your family," eagerly interrupted Mrs. L——.

"Yes, just so," responded her brother, "but how is it? you seem pleased with the proposition."

"I am," returned she. "Another time I might not have been so willing, nor so able to go, but now"—and she glanced about sorrowfully, "I am a little tired of Easy Hall, and think I should enjoy a change."

"Tired of Easy Hall?" questioned her brother, while he gazed round admiringly, and then resting his eyes somewhat suspiciously upon her face, continued, "or tired of yourself?"

"In truth, not exactly either," replied Mrs. L——, at the same time starting up and leading

the way into the house. "Come in," continued she, "supper will soon be ready, meanwhile tell me more of your plans," and entering the library she seated herself in a darkened corner, where her tell-tale face could not so easily be read.

"I have told you nearly all," replied Mr. H——, advancing to her side, and then leaning over the back of her chair, continued, "just now I am more interested to know the cause of your weariness," and he tenderly smoothed her soft brown hair.

"Never mind, brother dear," returned she, clasping his other hand which rested on the chair in hers. "I have had a little trouble, but just now had rather not speak of it, so please don't question me." The tear which dropped on her hand though, told her brother it was not as small as she would fain persuade him to believe, but he refrained from questioning her further, and said,

"Lizzie, how long do you suppose we intend to be absent?"

"O, three or four months, replied she."

"Three or four! rather eight or nine. You would not expect us to return before warm weather."

"No, I suppose you ought not to return before then, but such a long stay will prevent me carrying out my plans for the good of my village

neighbors this winter. I have been so engaged with home duties, and the entertaining of my friends this summer, I have made scarcely any acquaintances, save those of the summer residents, and I really long to go amongst these people. Another thing, how can I manage your family for such a length of time? they are not children, you know."

"I have thought of both these things," replied Mr. Huntingdon, "and have feared you would consider it too much care; but I know no one else I could obtain with whom they would be pleased, or who would exert the right influence over them, and besides Margaret is so anxious to have you come, I trust you will for her sake. I ought to mention, too, that Georgia Noble, brother Henry's step-daughter, is with us, and will remain some time. Her father wishes her to be removed from the society and influence of rather a dissipated young man, with whom she has become acquainted, and has therefore sent her to us. She will not trouble you though, being very reserved and quiet in her manner."

"Well, I shall come," returned Mrs. L—. "I may perhaps find it a little wearisome, and governing your daughters rather perplexing, but I will do the best I can."

"And that will be the best, I have no fears,"

responded the fond brother. Just here a servant entered and announced tea ; and, leaving them, we will glance about Easy Hall.

Easy Hall was thus named by one of the lady friends of the former owner, from the fact that visitors, the instant they entered its doors, looked in vain for that tyrant of the present age, torturing ceremony. Each one was at liberty to dress, walk, eat and speak as they thought proper ; and as the visitors at Easy Hall were generally well-bred, sensible people, and its owner peculiarly so, it followed as a matter of course that no house around was as charming and attractive and now though recently fallen into Mrs. Livingston's hands, it still maintains its former reputation. It is situated on a hill side of the beautiful town of R——, "that little Swiss village of America," as one of our poets has remarked. The surroundings are indeed highly picturesque. Standing in the summer-house, upon a prominent point a little distance from the house, one's eyes are feasted on the panorama spread before them. In the background, clear against the blue sky, stands H—— Hill, now clothed in its gorgeous autumn robes, more varied and more beautiful than elsewhere, on account of the great dissimilarity and abundance of the foliage.

Nestling at the foot of the hill are mingled in

“charming confusion,” the tasty homes of poets and scholars, side by side with those of “rustic cottager” and “sturdy yeoman.” Both gaze alike upon the clear sheet of water before them, H—— Harbor, which now reflects clouds of purple, red and orange, shaded off into faint pink and yellow, and trees of all forms and sizes.

Nearer to us are other sheets of water, as clear and pellucid as the harbor, but smaller in size. Their banks are adorned to the very edge with water-loving trees and herbs, which, ever now and then, dip their tender branches 'neath the surface. Separating these sheets of water, one salt and the other fresh, is a dam, shielded on each side with drooping willows. A rude mill, and the nets of fishermen hanging near by, impart a foreign air to the scene. The shore of both sides of the harbor is distinctly seen. Now the setting sun causes the hills and trees to cast deep shadows over the nearer one, but its sombre aspect only adds beauty by contrast, to the farther one. Hill and dale, water, clouds, bright sunshine, waving trees, cottage, mansion, ruins, all — all are here, and all arranged in delicate and pleasing combinations.

Easy Hall itself, is a double, old, though newly fashioned house, and like its owners *easy*. Easy is the entrance, a step, a portico with seats either side of it—another step, and one is ushered into a

long hall furnished with lounges and chairs, while its walls are adorned with portraits. At the end is another entrance, opening into another portico, covered with vines and provided with seats. And here, one gains another view of hill-side, dale, trees and flowers, as before. This hall is the favorite "rendezvous" of the house. Here are said the pleasant "good mornings," here whispered the kind "good nights"—here, over the large hall stove, in winter, or 'neath one of the vine-covered entrances in summer, are told the news and village stories,—here visitors love to linger, and here have been witnessed many a sad scene of parting, or merry one of meeting. Leading from this hall are many pleasant rooms, while above are a number more, all furnished with taste and neatness, and with that inviting air peculiar to but few homes. From the windows are seen, in every direction, nature's loveliest pictures, ever charming, ever new.

And now, whether promenading the piazza on the east end of the house, which looks down upon the village beneath, and off to H—— Hill, or lolling in the library, reading rare works, and anon gazing through vines upon the tasty lodge, summer-house and pleasant hill-side, or strolling over garden, farm-yard, orchard, woods or fields, plucking fruit and gathering wild flowers, one

feels he is indeed happy to be a guest at Easy Hall.

A few days passed, and the mistress of this place stood gazing with moistened eyes upon every familiar object — objects which had so lately assumed a new beauty, a new character, now standing only as sad, mute reminders of the past.

She turned hastily as her coachman approached, and with a sudden, choking sob, bade Mary, the coachman's wife, and her housekeeper, when away, a tearful "good-bye." Seated in her carriage, she lowered her veil, determined to see no more; but when the carriage reached the end of the avenue, she raised it again to smile on the passer-by, and to say a few kind words to those she bade "farewell!"

CHAPTER II.

OPENING the door we are in the parlor of Hillside, Mr. Huntingdon's residence, and find ourselves in quite a family circle. That is Mr. Huntingdon's son, the young man so busily reading at the centre table, while the dark-haired lady beside him, is his twin sister, Margaret. Opposite to them are Miss Noble, the young lady before mentioned, and Bessie Huntingdon, the pet and the baby of the Huntingdon family, though she is eighteen years old. Reclining on an adjoining sofa is her next older sister, Louise, apparently sleeping.

Just now Bessie is talking, her brown eyes sparkling with merriment, and her rosy cheeks glowing with excitement.

"I assure you," continued she, "it was a rare time. There was Monsieur DeRenz, walking up and down, as full of rage as he could be. He does not know sufficient English to express himself when he gets vexed, and so abused us in French, which only made us laugh the more, it is so ridicu-

lous to hear one talk angrily, when you cannot understand a word he says."

"What are you chattering about?" said Louise from the sofa, while she half raised herself up, and leaned upon her arm.

"O you are awake are you," replied Bessie. "I thought the cares of to-day had entirely worn out your system, but I find curiosity in as good a condition as ever."

"Do cease your nonsense," pettishly returned Louise, "and reply to my question."

"Well, then," said Bessie, "as you are for once so greatly interested in something sensible you shall be gratified. To-day, you must know, we had our singing lessons from Mons. DeRenz, and you have probably heard me mention, what a strange manner he has of tossing his head, when he sings. Well, when he was right in the most pathetic part of one of the pieces he is teaching us, Kate Evans, who was standing directly behind him, commenced mimicking him. It was so ludicrous, happening just then, that we could scarcely restrain bursting into laughter. We thought he was so engrossed, however, in the song that he did not notice us, but what was our consternation to see him rise and say to Kate, with a low bow,

"Very well done, Mademoiselle."

"What do you mean?" replied she, coloring.

"That you make one good monkey," returned he.

"I was only taking a lesson from a greater one," said she haughtily.

"Then commenced a scene; Monsieur lost his temper, said all sorts of strange adjectives in English, and finally spent his anger in French. He left the room in a rage, saying he would see Madame, and I can hardly wait for to-morrow to come, to see the end of it. Kate will have to apologize, I think, and the rest of us, too, for laughing so much."

"You deserve to," said Margaret, "and as for Kate, she should be severely reproved. I do not see how such a young girl would dare to be so impertinent."

"But she didn't think," pleaded Bessie.

"But she should think," replied Margaret very firmly. "Want of thought is no excuse for her. I hope you won't copy any of her manners."

"Never fear that," returned Bessie. "Cousin, what do you think of it!" continued she, turning to Miss Noble.

"I was thinking what a strange opinion her teacher would have of the manners of American people. Judging from what I have heard, one might teach in all the schools of Europe, and never meet with such an unprovoked insult."

"You are right, Coz," said Edward, laying down the book which he had been perusing. "I do not know what is the reason, but it seems to me our people, young people, especially—glancing at Bessie—think they have the privilege of being rude to foreigners, laughing at their mistakes, and betraying them into them. Our free country, perhaps, favors such freedom."

"But Monsieur was certainly ungentlemanly to get so vexed," rather quickly spoke Bessie.

"Many foreigners would not regard it exactly ungentlemanly," replied Edward. "They consider it only honest and proper self-respect to resent an insult in such a manner, and do not regard self-control as we do. I have heard it remarked that they consider us deceitful, because we endeavor to conceal and control our feelings on such occasions."

"*We* control ourselves, brother Ned! Who did I hear talking *very* loudly to the groom the other day, because his horse didn't look just so," questioned Bessie, slightly patting her brother's shoulder the while.

"I did not speak of myself, individually," returned he, "I spoke of our nation in general—those people who do pretend to be good, who do control themselves, like Margaret, for instance."

A slight tone of sarcasm was visible in these last

words, but Margaret did not reply ; she only bent her head a little lower over her work, to raise it instantly as the door bell rang.

"I wonder who that is," said Louise, starting from the lounge, and arranging her tumbled dress.

"Not any of your friends, I think," replied Bessie, "it is too stormy an eve for them to venture out."

"Some one to see father," said Edward, as he heard a person entering the library.

"And I'll go up to mother now," added Bessie, starting off hastily, but moderating her pace somewhat as she ascended the stairs. Passing through the entry, and by her father who was descending to the library, she opened the door noiselessly and soon was bending over a pale, languid lady reclining on a lounge. Tenderly kissing her, she drew up a low chair and seated herself on it, then said in low sweet tones,

"O mamma, dear mamma, you do not know how I shall miss these pleasant times with you when you are gone, and to think this is to be the last. I'm so glad that, that gentleman called father away, that I may be all alone with you once more. How I shall miss you."

"I know you will," returned her mother, taking Bessie's hand into her thin, wasted one, "and I

shall miss you, too. You have been a great comfort and help to me, even if you have been sometimes heedless and trying."

"But mamma, who will correct me now you are gone? Margaret is so severe, and Ned — well, sometimes I care for what he says, and sometimes I do not; and as for the rest, well, I don't mind them much."

"You forget, Bessie, your aunt Livingston will be here, and I know you will love her."

"O yes, I did forget her," replied Bessie, "but she is such a stranger to me, it will take me a long while to feel acquainted."

"Not so long as you imagine," returned Mrs. Huntingdon, "she is very sociable. I hope, Bessie you will be as kind and obedient to her as you are to me."

"I shall try, mamma, but"——

"But what, Bessie?"

"No matter now, it is something I ought not to say."

"Very well, dear," returned Mrs. Huntingdon, "But is there not something you do wish to say?"

"Yes," replied Bessie, a little absently, for she had been following up her thought, which was that she was afraid the whole family would not endeavor to please Mrs. Livingston, but she refrain-

from expressing it, having been often charged by her father to avoid anything which might prove unpleasant to Mrs. H——, connected with her departure.

“Well, tell me now,” said her mother, “we may not have as good an opportunity before I leave.”

“Oh! mamma, I can’t believe you are going, and I shall not till you are really gone. Now, what I wish to say is this, that while you are gone you’ll forget all my naughty deed’s, and think of me only as Bessie, your comfort, as you call me sometimes, and that you’ll think of me every night at six o’clock, and I will of you.”

“Yes, Bessie, I probably shall think of you only as my comfort,” returned Mrs. Huntingdon, fondly, while she smoothed Bessie’s hair, who had left her chair and was now kneeling by her mother’s lounge. “And be assured,” continued she, “I shall not only think of you at six o’clock, but pray for you, too; and now I have also a request to make, that at that time you will pray and read the little Bible I gave you. Commence at the first chapter in Matthew, and I will also, and then every night we shall be reading the same chapter.”

“Yes, mamma, I will,” sadly returned Bessie, “and it will be very pleasant to think we are reading the same chapter, but, dear me! it does

not make me any better to read my Bible and to pray."

"Because you do not read and pray earnestly, Bessie, and in a right manner. O, I had hoped ere this to have seen you a Christian, and that you would consider the Bible the most precious of all books. You can hardly imagine the comfort, the inexpressible comfort it has been to me. God grant you may find it so."

Here Bessie raised her head, and gazing wonderingly at her mother, said,

"How strange this religion is!"

"Yes, it is a mystery," replied Mrs. H——, "a great mystery, and to be known, must be experienced. Go to the table there and bring me my little Bible. I wish you to read some verses."

Bessie procured the Bible, and her mother continued: "Turn to 1 Corinthians ii. 7-16." Bessie found the place and read,

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them

unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

"That is sufficient," said Mrs. Huntingdon. "Now turn to 2 Cor. 4., commencing at "But if our Gospel be hid."

Bessie found the place and continued, "But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach—"

“That will do,” said Mrs. H —, interrupting her.

“So, then, my mind must be blinded too,” said Bessie, as she closed the book.

“Yes,” returned her mother, “blinded by sin and Satan, and this reminds me to say, that I wish you would pray two short prayers which were given once, by a gentleman in Scotland, to a poor serving maid, and were instrumental in her salvation: ‘Lord, show me myself.’ ‘Lord, show me Thyself.’ Will you.”

“Yes, mamma, I cannot refuse you,” and folding her hands tightly together, Bessie sighed heavily a number of times, forcing back a heart full of tears—tears which tender solicitude for her mother’s precarious state, told her must not be shed. While gazing at the little Bible which lay in her lap she suddenly exclaimed,

“Oh, mamma, I believe I should love to read the Bible better, if you would leave me yours, it is marked in so many places, and I should know what verses you have loved. Will you not?”

Mrs. H — was silent awhile, then said, “Yes dear, you may have it, and never, never part with it.”

But Bessie had seen the struggle it had cost her mother to give it up, and quickly said,

“No, mamma, I will not ask for your Bible,

you must love it so much — it was very selfish in me” — and she started to put it away.

“Stop,” returned her mother. “I did feel a pang at first in parting with it, but it is all gone now, and I prefer that you should have it. You can give me your little one, and I shall prize it highly.”

“Dear mamma, you are too kind,” replied Bessie, “how can I take it” — a few tears now dropping in spite of herself.

She took it though from her mother’s hands, and while turning the leaves over said, “Oh, I wish that all Christians were like you !”

Her mother sighed at this remark, but made no response. She knew Bessie would find her aunt Livingston a consistent Christian, and trusted much good would result to Bessie from her example.

None of the Huntingdon family were professors of religion, save Mrs. Huntingdon and Margaret. Mrs. Huntingdon had embraced religion in early life, but Margaret had only been a professor six months. Margaret’s belief and ideas of Christian life will be developed hereafter ; suffice it to say they did not exert a beneficial influence over the family.

The mother and daughter sat for some time in silence, then, hearing her husband’s returning

footsteps, Mrs. Huntingdon said, "Bessie, turn to the 14th chap. of St. John." Bessie found the place just as Mr. Huntingdon entered the room, who advanced immediately to his wife's side and read searchingly the loved face, to see if it bore traces of weariness.

"Everything is ready," said he, finally, "and we leave to-morrow at four o'clock.

"Mortimer," replied his wife, in a trembling tone, "this, then, may be the last night I shall be in my earthly home. I must see you all together, and — and pray with you *all*. Do not deny me!" and she anxiously looked up for consent. She met the clear, pleasant smile of a loving, though disbelieving husband, who replied,

"Certainly not, dear, if it would please you. Shall I call the children, now?"

"Yes, O yes, children, servants, all, returned the excited and anxious mother.

"Let me just whisper 'be calm,'" responded he, bending fondly over her.

"I will," said she, folding her hands quietly over her breast and closing her eyes, while her husband left the room to do her bidding.

"The family were rather surprised at such a request, but ere many minutes past, they were all assembled in her room, quiet and sad, waiting for her to assume the cross she had determined to take up, weary and faint though she was.

“Read that chapter, Bessie,” said she, in a faint voice.

Bessie glanced about a little, hesitatingly, and then her eyes resting upon her loved mother’s face, she commenced in low tones, “Let not your heart be troubled.” Not a word was uttered, and as Bessie concluded, the wife and mother clasped her hands, and in trembling tones said, “Let us pray.”

All bowed in prayer, and then arose the out-gushings of that Christ-filled heart. It was truly a blessed season with her Father, and the sobs and sighs, and the deep silence, told that that prayerless household had once felt the effect of true, fervent prayer.

Very low and sad were the “good nights,” and quietly each one departed from her, who was so lovely, so precious in their sight.

The husband alone remained,—remained sitting with his head bowed upon his hand. Finally he said :

“Maggie, dear, where is that little Bible of yours?”

“Bessie has it,” returned the wife, “but here is hers, we exchanged Bibles to-night,” and she passed it to him. He took it, and long perused its sacred pages while Mrs. H’s silent petitions ascended, that it might be blessed to him.

"This is beautiful and sublime," said he, at last, while placing it on the table; "I wish I could believe in it," but his wife heard him not, for, wearied and worn with excitement, she had fallen asleep. He gazed at her, and marked the pleasant, serene smile, and thought, "There must be a strange power in this religion. How different she has seemed these last two or three years. I cannot understand it. I must examine into it, and I shall have an excellent opportunity in Florida;" then striking the bell, he summoned the nurse, and descended into the library.

As he entered, some one started in the room, and attempted to escape by him. Putting out his arm, he enfolded Bessie, and turning up the gas, said:

"You here; why do you wish to leave me, pet? Don't sob so, dear;" then leading her to his arm-chair, he seated her on his knee, and tenderly tried to soothe her grief. "Be calm, Bessie dear," said he. "We shall soon be back, and perhaps your dear mother may return quite recovered."

"No father," replied she, sobbingly. "Mamma is too good for this world. I shall never see her more on earth, and I am not fit to go to heaven. And you — Oh! father, you are not a Christian. Will you go to heaven?"

The strong man started, his heart was pierced as with a dart ; one tear fell, and he moaned, " I fear not, Bessie, unless, unless — "

" Unless what ? " said she, anxiously.

" Unless I become like your mother."

" Well, why don't you ? " still eagerly questioned Bessie. " Let us both begin together."

" Yes, dear, we will," returned the perplexed father, recalling his determination to examine the matter.

" Shall I pray first, or you, father ? " continued Bessie.

" Pray ! " and he gazed anxiously at her, " you can pray ; " but he could not humble himself— Satan prevailed ; and Bessie, seeing his perplexity, and fearing she had committed some error, said :

" I hardly know what I have said, I feel so bad. Perhaps you prefer to pray alone," and rising, she kissed him, and bade him good night, and he permitted her to depart.

Bessie felt the effect of his manner, and her prayers, though more penitent and earnest, were chilled by the remembrance of it.

Mr. Huntingdon remained thoughtful a few moments, then his eyes fell upon some important papers in his library, which required attention before his departure, and in a few moments his mind

was engrossed by them, and prayerless, and with thoughts full upon earthly matters, he retired to rest.

The Holy Spirit, the One who so sweetly admonishes of wrong, and fain would lead to Christ, was grieved, and thus departed.

CHAPTER III.

THE next day, at noon, Mrs. Livingston arrived at Hill-side, and found the Huntingdon family in all that confusion and excitement incident to the departure of friends. After exchanging greetings with her brother and nieces, she passed directly to the room of Mrs. Huntingdon, and noiselessly entering, seated herself beside her most cherished friend, as well as sister.

"Maggie, dear, I have come," said she, as she took Mrs. Huntingdon's hand, and imprinted a kiss upon her pale forehead.

"Yes, Lizzie, I knew you would," returned Mrs. H., pressing the hand of her sister; "and Oh! has Mortimer told you?"

"Told me what?" returned Mrs. L.

"Told you that I prayed with them all last night; but, Lizzie, it was not I, it was Christ in me. I thought I could not say a word, but I opened my mouth, and Christ filled it; and Oh! He has been so precious to me since."

Mrs. L. was in tears, but hastily brushing them away, she only said,

“Maggie, I am very, very glad.”

“Yes, I knew you would be, and now, Lizzie, I leave them all in your care. I may never see them again, and I pray you teach them the same Christianity you taught me. Bessie seems quite thoughtful, and Margaret — well, you understand her — and the rest, lead them gently, gently, though I know I need not say it, you will.”

“I shall try to, God helping me,” returned Mrs. L., sadly, for she felt, too, these might be the last words of her sister, and she was cherishing sacredly every one.

“Lizzie,” continued Mrs. H., “I wish you would take that little key, (pointing to one on the table beside her,) and unlock my writing desk, and bring me the package you will see on the top, directed to you.”

Mrs. L. did as requested, and brought it to her, who folded it in her hands on her bosom, closed her eyes, and was evidently in prayer some moments; then she reached it to Mrs. L., and said,

“There, it is mine no longer. I give it into your care, and if I do not return, open it; but treasure it sacredly, for it may be the last work of my life.”

Mrs. Livingston took the package, and placed it carefully away, then returning, said, “Maggie, I would’nt talk any longer, unless you have

something important to tell me about. You must try and get some rest, before you start."

"I wish I could sleep," returned Mrs. H. "I know I should be better prepared for this afternoon; but my brain is so active to-day, I can scarcely quiet myself enough to do so."

"Think of Christ," returned Mrs. L., "and you may be able to compose yourself. I heard some time since, of a very pious lady, suffering the same as you are, who, whenever she was troubled by wakefulness, would place her mind upon Christ and his sufferings, and would soon find herself quieted, and able to sleep."

"How beautiful!" returned Mrs. H., "resting on Jesus. Yes, I can rest there, too;" and, closing her eyes, she soon slept tranquilly.

Three o'clock came, and tender, loving hands, placed the light form of Mrs. Huntingdon in the carriage, destined to convey her to the steam-boat. Weary with the sad "good by's," and loving words of her servants, she sank back into the supporting arms of her husband, who tenderly enfolded and comforted her. As the coachman started, Mrs. Huntingdon turned her head a little, and gave one long look at her home, her dearly loved home; then said, "Good-bye, sweet home, forever!"

"No, Maggie dear," returned her husband,

cheerily, "do not speak so, for next spring, no doubt, you will enter it gaily, saying, 'welcome home !' "

She made no reply. Another carriage followed, and ere long they were all at the steam-boat, and by her side, each one endeavoring to do some further act of kindness, but which her attentive nurse forestalled. Soon the bell sounded, and one by one, each took a last fond caress, and heard the fervent "God bless you, my child, and lead you to Him," of their departing mother.

Sadly they passed down the gangway, and to the carriage, then entering, dropped the curtains, and gave way to the flood of grief, all had restrained the past few days.

The same feeling oppressed each heart, that they should never see mother again ; and Bessie and Margaret mourned for her as though she had, indeed, parted from them for ever.

It was a sad family that sat down to tea that night. Edward took his father's place ; and glancing around for Margaret, who had long taken her mother's place, he found her absent.

"Where's Margaret ?" said he, to Louise.

"In her room," replied Louise ; "she does not wish any supper."

"Pshaw ! what's the use of acting so," returned Edward ; "empty places enough without her

taking herself off. I suppose she thinks it will be exceedingly proper for her to remain in retirement for a week."

"Are you waiting for me?" said Mrs. Livingston, as she entered the room, and seated herself in the place Margaret usually filled; and, without waiting for a reply, continued, "Where's Margaret?"

"Doing penance," replied Edward.

"Penance! what do you mean?" returned she, pleasantly.

"O! shutting herself up in her room, and torturing herself with all sort of foolish fears and imaginations."

"Perhaps she does not feel well," rejoined Mrs. L., quietly, and then she glanced about questioningly. She was waiting for a blessing, but as the sudden thought came that there was no one to ask it but herself, she hesitated, and Edward, perceiving it, hastened to commence serving from the various dishes before him, inwardly exulting that he had prevented it. As he raised his eyes, however, he saw her bent head, and knew that a silent one was ascending, all the more powerful in its effects upon the family, from being silent just then.

Miss Noble was the first to speak, commencing the previous subject.

"Well, I must say I agree with you, cousin

Ned, regarding Margaret ; “for my part, I think it is my duty to drive away sorrow when it can’t be cured.”

“So do I,” said Louise, “so what will we do this evening to enjoy ourselves. What do you say, Ned?”

“Me! do you mean me?” replied he, a little absently. “O, I have an engagement at the Club.”

“That detestable Club!” returned Louise ; “you might as well live there, for all the company you are ever to your sisters. Now I was thinking about attending the concert this eve to drive away the blues, and thought perhaps you would be willing to attend Georgie and me,” turning to Miss Noble.

“I should be very happy to accompany Miss Noble,” replied Edward, bowing to her, “and would permit you also to go,” glancing provokingly at his sister, “if it was not for this engagement ; as it is, you must find some other gallant, young Baker, for instance.”

Louise colored, and quickly replied, “Edward, I wish you would never mention him again ; you know I dislike him exceedingly.”

“Ah! I was not aware of it before,” replied he. “Were you, Miss Noble?”

“Oh! cease your contentions,” replied she ;

and turning to Mrs. Livingston, said, "This conversation must be highly edifying to you."

Mrs. L. smiled, and said, "Really, I hardly know what you have been saying, I have been so busily thinking."

"And Bessie, too," said Edward, shaking her chair. "What's the matter of you, child? you look as pale as a ghost."

"Do I," returned she, weariedly. "Well, my head aches a little, and I believe I'll be excused," glancing at her aunt.

After her departure, Mrs. L. tried to open conversation on various subjects, but all in vain, no one seemed disposed to reply.

Edward hurried his tea as quickly as possible, then immediately passed up to Bessie's room. He tried the door, but found it locked. Then he knelt down, and said, through the key hole, "Bessie, pet, let brother in just a moment."

She started from the lounge, where she had flung herself, and quickly opened the door.

He wound his arms about her, and leading her to the lounge, sat her down beside him. "Now, pet," commenced he, while stroking back her curls, "you feel very badly, I know; and, I presume, none of us will miss father and mother as much as you will; but I wish you to feel 'what can't be cured must be endured,' and get up a brave heart,

and be a woman about this matter. Don't go to acting like Margaret, making yourself a perfect martyr, and going about the house with a face that haunts every one you meet. Smile, pet, even if your heart does ache. Smile on me anyway ; precious few of such comforts I get."

She glanced lovingly up at him, and twining her arm around his neck, said, while she choked away the rising sob, "Yes, brother, you shall have smiles from me, if you'll promise me one thing."

"What is it?" returned he.

"That you won't abuse Margaret so much, nor plague Louise ; you know they can't bear your banterings as I do, and do you know you cause them a great deal of unhappiness !"

"Then they may improve, and try to please me," returned he.

"But you know, Edward, that is not the way to win them to it. Don't you recollect how many times you've told me about the conquering power of love ? You know you are wrong."

"Well," replied he, rising and glancing at his figure in the mirror, "you smile on me, and I'll cultivate gentleness with my dove like sisters."

"There it is again," said Bessie.

"Oh ! so it is," returned Edward, "I beg your pardon ; but the fact is, it will be a pretty hard habit to rid myself of, and if you see me refrain

from it, even once or twice a day, you must be content."

"I will try," said she, and then she rose and passed to the window, while Edward turned to go out, but stopped as he passed the bed, and taking up a little book which lay there, said, "O, you rogue! been reading a novel, hey!" but he said no more as he opened it.

"It is mother's Bible," said Bessie, leaning her head against the window. "I have been trying to read in it, but my head ached so, I could'nt."

"Well, I would'nt try to Bessie, you are good enough, any way," returned Edward, laying the book aside more reverently than he took it.

"No, Edward, I am not," and she advanced to his side with an evident determination to say more written on her face, which he comprehending, prevented, by saying, "Well, pet, I must be off; but don't let me find you up here on my return. I think I shall be back early to-night. Go down soon, and talk to aunt Livingston; she seems to be a kind, comforting sort of a body," and whistling a gay opera air, he disappeared.

Two hours later the family, save Edward and Margaret, were in the parlor and adjoining library. Louise sat on a divan at one end of the parlor, with a very slight, fair-haired youth. Bessie was at the piano, enjoying snatches of songs, with another young man, who stood by her side, while

Miss Noble and Mrs. Livingston were seated in the library, and apparantly occupied in reading the evening papers ; but every now and then, Miss Noble would glance quizzically over the top of her paper, at the couple on the divan, whom she could plainly see through the folding doors, while Mrs. Livingston's eyes only rested on her paper ; her thoughts were busy elsewhere. Sometimes she was startled by Bessie's ringing laugh ; and gazed admiringly at her, her beauty heightened to its utmost by her occupation, she sat thinking how much grace she needed, to guide such a warm, impulsive nature, correctly ; then turning to Louise she marked the low tones, the coquetish toss of her head, the simpering laugh, and felt she would, indeed, be a more difficult task than Bessie. Pained at the revelation of Louise's character, which she had gained during the evening, and feeling in a new sense how peculiarly she was placed, she was just determining to go to her own room, to reflect and seek guidance from above, when the young man beside of Louise, arose, and with a few bows and words, made his departure.

Louise closed the door after him, and a little piqued that Mr. Belmont's attentions had been so exclusively devoted to Bessie, she passed to her, and said, leaning over her shoulder, "Having a delightful time, arn't you, Bessie ? I sha'n't tell

you how much I envy you, you can imagine," and carelessly pinching the burning cheek of Bessie, she passed on to the library.

Yes, Bessie's cheek did burn, and her heart ached too, at Louise's tantalizing words, and manner; but her elastic temperament rebounded, and glancing first timidly, then with the coming breath, courageously up to Mr. Belmont, she asked, "What shall we sing now?"

"Where's Louise's book of songs?" returned he, a little absently.

"Here it is," said she, while he took it from the music rack, and opening it turned to

"Thy charms are but fleeting
Fair lady for me."

Bessie read with quick instinct, his feelings and desire of retaliation; she felt for a moment, too, the same desire, and played dashingly through part of the prelude, then suddenly stopped, a better feeling governing her and turning to him, said, "No, Mr. Belmont, I don't feel like singing it; sing something sweet, something quiet," and turning over the leaves, she commenced

Over the river they beckon to me,—

Loved ones who've crossed to the further side
The gleam of their snowy robes I see,

But their voices are lost in the dashing tide.
There's one with ringlets of sunny gold,

And eyes the-reflection of heaven's own blue;
He crossed in the twilight gray and cold,
And the pale mist hid him from mortal view;
We saw not the angels who met him there,
The gates of the city we could not see,—
Over the river, over the river,
My brother stands waiting to welcome me !

Over the river the boatman pale
Carried another, the household pet;
Her brown curls waved in the gentle gale,—
Darling Minnie ! I see her yet.
She crossed on her bosom her dimpled hands,
And fearlessly entered the phantom bark,
We felt it glide from the silver sands,
And all our sunshine grew strangely dark;
We know she is safe on the further side,
Where all the ransomed and angels be;
Over the river, the mystic river,
My childhood's idol is waiting for me.

For none return from those quiet shores,
Who cross with the boatman cold and pale;
We hear the dip of the golden oars,
And catch a gleam of the snowy sail;
And lo ! they have passed from our yearning hearts,
They cross the stream and are gone for aye.
We may not sunder the veil apart
That hides from our vision the gates of day;
We only know that their barks no more
May sail with us o'er life's stormy sea;
Yet somewhere I know on the unseen shore,
They watch, and beckon, and wait for me.

And I sit and think when the sunset's gold
Is flushing river and hill and shore,
I shall one day stand by the water cold

And list for the sound of the boatman's oar;
I shall watch for a gleam of the flapping sail;
I shall hear the boat as it gains the strand;
I shall pass from sight with the boatman pale,
To the better shore of the spirit land;
I shall know the loved who have gone before,
And joyfully sweet will the meeting be,
When over the river, the peaceful river,
The angel of death shall carry me.

Bessie's heart was full of sorrowful emotion ere she had sung two stanzas, but crushing down her feelings, she continued even to the close, then quietly shutting the music book, she placed it in the rack, to hide somewhat her emotion, saying meanwhile,

"I never appreciated that song before; how beautifully sad it is; it makes me think of mother. I wish I had not sung it to-night."

Mr. Belmont was just about to reply, when Louise advanced from the library and said, "Oh, Bessie! how sweetly you sang that song!" then continued in lower tones, "Don't mind what I said just now, I didn't mean it."

Bessie only glanced up at Louise for a reply, but the confiding, gentle glance assured Louise all was forgiven.

CHAPTER IV.

TEN o'clock that night found Edward Huntingdon and Mr. Belmont seated in Edward's room. Leaning back in his arm-chair Edward said, "Well, Belmont, my father and mother are really gone, and thus have left a heavy responsibility on my shoulders — this huge mansion and a family of seven women!"

"Seven!" returned Belmont; "how do you make that out?"

"Yes, seven — seven women; just you count, sir, and see. My good Aunt Livingston, Margaret, Miss Noble, Louise, Bessie and" —

"And who else, pray?" interrupted his friend.

"Why, Mary the cook, and Jane her helpmeet."

"Ah! yes. I didn't think of them. However, you'll probably survive all your care. Besides, this responsibility, as you call it, will benefit you; steady you a little. Yes, a first-rate thing for you, Ned!"

"Steady me! Ha! ha! I think you better talk about being steadied; you who totter on

everything — now on politics, now on love, then on business, then religion.”

“Do you really mean what you say?” returned Belmont, quizzically.

“Yes, sir!” said Edward, emphatically.

“Why, my dear sir, you must be mistaken,” replied Belmont blandly; “just give proof of it.”

“Well, some time ago, if my memory serves me correctly, you were an out and out Black Republican — now, a stronger, a more conservative Union man does not exist. Am I not right?”

“Yes, sir, decidedly, with this addenda: I was a Black Republican because my father was.”

“Now, then, the next thing. Let me see — O, love; well, there was that pretty” —

“Drop that subject, if you please,” testily interrupted Belmont.

“Well, then, business. First, you thought you’d be a civil engineer, and studied a while; then a doctor, and now — well, you are neither, but rather of a gentleman at large. Don’t you think here, you require a little steadying? As our old Prof. Green used to say, ‘Young man, young man, you must have an object in view.’”

“My object will come when I am ready for it,” replied Belmont. “You know very well what were the circumstances which obliged me to give up surveying; and as for being a physician, that was

never a wish or intention of mine. I mentioned it to you, because my friends, especially father, desired it."

Ah! was that so," returned Edward. "Well, the last point you won't dispute with me, I know — religion. When we entered college, you were an Orthodox man."

"Boy, you mean," interrupted Belmont.

"Well, then, boy," continued Edward. "Then you had a slight partiality for Unitarianism."

"An Unitarian minister, you should say."

"Well, no matter, 't was a want of steadiness. Then you became slightly interested in Swedenborg. And, finally, when you were in the city of G——, sat under ——'s teaching. Now, sir, what have you to say!" triumphantly exclaimed Edward, snapping his fingers.

"All true," returned Belmont in a low, sad tone, as he ran his hands again and again through his hair; but Ned, I hope soon to be steadied. I have drifted and veered worse upon religion than any other subject. I was in earnest, though, seeking after truth, and, like many other men filled with self-conceit, I forsook the good old path trodden by so many veterans in the cause, and attempted to find a religion which I thought consistent with my ideas of the desires and needs of man. Fool! that I have been. I have nearly wrecked myself

on the quicksands of speculation and fanaticism, and now I hardly know where I am. I said I hoped soon to be steadied, but truly all is darkness about me. And you, Ned, why, you are in the same condition."

"Parsons would call me worse," replied Edward, with a forced laugh, "for you see your state and evidently regret it; but as for myself—well, I don't care much, it will come right, by-and-by."

"Where?" questioned Belmont mournfully.

"Where?" returned Edward. "Why—why—pshaw! don't let us talk of this any more, it won't do any good, only gives a fellow the "blues;" and, after all, I don't see but what I do just about as well as half the church members."

"Now, Edward, don't make such a shabby evasion. What have you to do with their sins? To your own Master you stand or fall, and their guilt won't excuse or benefit you in any manner."

"'Spose not," replied Edward; "but now, won't you oblige me by changing the subject? I can't talk on religion, and, what is more, I don't like to."

"The natural heart is enmity against God," continued Belmont.

"Yes, I know that."

"Why should it be?"

"O, don't pester me any longer with your

questions. Go to Bessie. I found her reading the Bible to-day, perhaps she can tell you."

"Did you?" returned Belmont with animation.

"Yes," replied Edward; "and speaking of religion reminds me to tell you of last night in mother's room. I never shall forget it—no, never. Mother called us all in, and prayed with us; and how she, such a modest, shrinking woman, could have had courage to do such a thing, I can't possibly imagine. But the prayer, Oh! Belmont, I never heard such a prayer before from any person; it seemed to me she was actually talking with God. I think mother is a sincere Christian, if there is such a thing, and she really seems to enjoy it. But a truce to this conversation, and to cheer us, suppose we take some books."

"What have you, new and interesting?" asked Belmont, and he walked up to Edward's well filled library. He looked over the titles, but as he gazed at one after the other, he sighed, and said, "Trash! trash! I don't want any such books to-night. I believe I'll go home; good bye to you," and before Edward could prevent him, he was down stairs, and out of the house.

"Silly fellow!" said Edward to himself; "what is the use in his tormenting himself so," and passing to his library, he took down a work of one of our most ingenious, subtle, and false

teachers of religion, and was soon both bewildered and fascinated by the entrancing pages.

He was satisfied, because the ideas appeared sublime, and of deep import; he could not comprehend many of them — a very jargon of compounded nouns, and high sounding adjectives; but then this incomprehensibility, with just a shading of truth, had a powerful charm. When he did meet a plain truth, however, it had double force, and double beauty to his mind, from the darkness which surrounded it. It was a late hour ere he closed the book, and he threw it aside, saying, “O, what a mind has D —, deep, vigorous, broad. Give me an enlarged mind, able to grasp something beside the nursery stories of youth.” His reading certainly had left one impression on his mind — the power of man, not of his Creator!

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At ten o'clock that night, Margaret Huntingdon was pacing up and down her chamber, her hands folded tightly over her pale forehead. Her eyes were swollen, and red with weeping, and every now and then she sighed heavily. Occasionally she stopped, and glancing upward, murmured, “God, help me,” then would resume her sad tread again. A low knock at her door startled her, but she gave no answer.

“Margaret,” said Mrs. Livingston, softly, “may I not come in a moment?”

Margaret cast an imploring look above, then around, and replied, “O! please excuse me to-night?”

“I do not like to,” returned Mrs. L. “Can you not let me see you for a few moments?”

Margaret hesitated, then said, “In a moment.” Quickly she drew her hair from behind her ears, smoothed it a little, and then turned the gas somewhat lower, though it was dim before. Then she passed to the door, and, unlocking it, just opened it a little, thereby intimating to Mrs. L. that she did not desire her to come further.

But Mrs. Livingston had a waiter in her hand, with toast and tea, and, therefore, passed directly in, and placed it on the table. Turning the gas up, she said, “Now, Margaret, I know you don’t wish to see me to-night, or anybody; but I wanted to see you, very much, and have you eat something, too; so I made this cup of tea, and toasted this bread, all myself, so I know you won’t refuse to try it.”

“You are very good, aunt,” returned Margaret. “I am sorry to trouble you, but really —”

“No trouble, dear,” interrupted Mrs. L., “a true pleasure for me; but you must not say you cannot eat. I know all about the feeling, Marga-

ret. I have often seen the time when I thought food would choke me ; but I ate, ate to please others, and from a sense of duty."

"Do you think it a duty to eat," quietly returned Margaret.

"Certainly," replied Mrs. L. "Do you not?"

"I had not thought of it in such a light."

"Well, I can assure you it is a duty."

Margaret made no reply, and mechanically poured out the tea, sweetened and drank it, and then eat part of the bread. After she finished, Mrs. Livingston took up the waiter ; but Margaret took it away from her, saying, "Let it remain here, I will carry it down in the morning."

"No," returned Mrs. L., pleasantly, "I wish to finish what I have begun."

"But I will not allow you to wait on me," said Margaret, a little haughtily, still holding on to the waiter. "I will carry it down," and she started away with it quite rapidly.

Mrs. L. did not demur again, well pleased that it would divert Margaret's attention from herself, for even a few moments. When she returned, she found Mrs. Livingston examining her books. She passed over a number, and finally taking down the "Words of Jesus," bound with "The Faithful Promisor," said, "O, Margaret, you have this little gem ; how much comfort and instruction have I received from its pages !"

“I have never read it,” replied Margaret. “Mr. Leslie gave it to me a few weeks ago ; but I have not had time to look into it.”

“Then you have still a rich treat in store,” rejoined Mrs. L. “If you wish to enjoy it, read it as I have, either at night or in the morning. I have been greatly surprised at times, to see how peculiarly appropriate it would be to my circumstances each day. I was speaking of it once to a friend, as to how precious I had found it, and she remarked that ‘all unfoldings of the “Word” are precious ; that if I noticed, it was the verse for each day which lingered in my mind ; that Macduff cracks the nut of divine truth, and gives us the kernel.’ Let me see, what day of the month is it to-day ?”

“The 22d,” replied Margaret, evidently a little annoyed at Mrs. L.’s presence. But though she noticed it, she paid no attention to it ; but turning to the day, said,

“‘Your sorrow shall be turned into joy,’” John xvi. 20. “O, this is beautiful ! and so appropriate, let me read it for you : ‘Christ’s people are a sorrowing people ! Chastisement is their badge, ‘great tribulation’ is their appointed discipline. When they enter the gates of glory, He is represented as wiping away tears from their eyes,’” and so she continued through the healing leaves

for the day. Her voice died softly away on the last words, and as she looked up to Margaret, for an expression of her opinion, she saw her eyes were filled with tears.

"It is very beautiful!" said Margaret. "Let me see it?"

She passed her the book, then laying her hand gently on Margaret's shoulder, said, "I must go now. God bless you and comfort you; good night!"

"Good night," softly returned Margaret. "I think you have opened a mine for me here." glancing at the book.

"A few precious gems you mean," smilingly rejoined Mrs. L., "gathered from the great mine of eternal truth;" and, with another smile and bow, she passed on to the room of Bessie.

She found her door ajar; but seeing no light, was about to retreat, when Bessie's low voice just reached her, saying, "Aunty?"

"Yes, dear," returned Mrs. L., entering her room, "where are you?"

"Here," responded she from the window. Mrs. L. passed over to her, and said, "What are you doing here, Bessie, without a light?"

"Without a light!" replied Bessie, "surely you do not call this beautiful moonlight darkness?"

“No, Bessie ; it is beautiful, more purely beautiful than any other light. But what are you thinking about, pet ?” and Mrs. L. twined her arm about her.

“Thank you, for calling me pet,” returned Bessie, leaning her head against Mrs. L.’s shoulder. “It seems so natural and protecting. Do you know, I feel so sad to be growing old ! I have been petted so long, that I yearn for these attentions at times, spite of all my fast growing convictions, that it is time for me to overcome them.”

“Not yet, not yet,” said Mrs. L., drawing her closer ; “but you are evasive ; you have not answered my question.”

“Thinking of mamma and father ; wondering whether they were gazing at the same moon and stars. Is’nt it comforting that no matter how far we are separated from friends, we can constantly have the same objects to gaze at ?”

“It is,” replied Mrs. L., “but, Bessie, I know a more comforting thought still.”

“What is it ?” returned Bessie, quickly.

“That no matter how far we may be separated from friends, even if divided by the broad river of death, we have the same God to watch over us, the same Jesus to adore, and the same Comforter Divine, to speak peace to our souls. Is this not precious ? exceedingly precious !”

“To Christians it must be,” replied Bessie, very sadly ; “but I, poor faithless soul, know nothing of this preciousness.”

“He is waiting to give it to you, Bessie. Do you not remember He says, ‘Behold I stand at the door, and knock ; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.’”

“Oh ! aunty, the way is dark ; I do not see Jesus.”

“No matter how dark, lean upon Him and trust, sweetly trust Him, and all will be light.”

“But I am so sinful.”

“His blood cleanseth from all sin.”

“O ! that I could feel all this you tell me. I know it, but do not feel it.”

“Pray, dear one, pray, and cast even this burden on the Lord, and simply trust Him, and the feeling will come.”

“And have I nothing to do ?”

“No, nothing, but trust. Do you not remember those sweet words :

‘ Other merit have I, none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee
Leave, ah ! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.’ ”

“No, I never heard them ; O, they are sweet, teach them to me.” and there, in the soft moon-

light, the mother in Christ taught the babe these fervent utterings for divine help, ending with

Plenteous grace with Thee is found,—
 Grace to pardon all my sins;
 Let the healing streams abound,
 Make and keep me pure within;
 Thou of life the Fountain art,
 Freely let me take of Thee,
 Spring Thou up within my heart,
 Rise to all eternity.

A trusting, heavenly smile, played over Bessie's face, as she sank sweetly to sleep that night.

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Ten o'clock found Louise Huntingdon seated in her room, intently perusing a late novel, while Miss Noble was engaged in writing. An half hour passed thus, then Louise, dropping her book, leaned her head back against her chair and seemed busily thinking. While thus engaged, Miss Noble startled her by saying,

“Lulu, are you asleep?”

“Asleep! no indeed replied Louise, “far from that. I've been thinking of that song, “Over the river,” Bessie sang this evening. The lines

“Over the river the boatman pale
 Carried another, the household pet;
 Her brown curls waved in the gentle gale,
 Darling Minnie, I see her yet,”

ring in my ears constantly, and I've been thinking supposing Bessie, our pet, should die. I wish I hadn't spoken so to her this evening."

"Why, what did you say?" inquired Miss Noble.

Louise repeated the occurrence of the evening and then added, "I don't know what made me say it to her, for she is too good to be spoken to in such a manner. I did not mean it for her after all, I said it to spite Mr. Belmont, for he scarcely spoke to me all the evening."

"Louise" replied Georgie, "I wish you would not make such remarks, for they cause a great deal of unhappiness both to yourself and others, without affording any benefit. And now, that we are speaking of this evening, let me mention another matter to you. I noticed your aunt Livingston watched you and Mr. Baker very closely, and I do not think she was pleased with your manners. If I were you, I would be a little more careful in future.

"Georgie," replied Louise, quite pettishly, "I wish you would cease to find fault with my manners. I cannot help them; and as for aunt Livingston, she is such a stiff, particular body, she would see faults in Bessie, even. I have made up my mind to have as little to do with her as possible,

while she is here. I expect it will try her very much to see us going to balls and the opera, for she thinks it a great sin to attend such places."

"So did my mother," responded Georgie, but I don't see any harm in it, provided one behaves herself, and is select in the choice of company. I think you are rather careless in this respect."

"There it is again," quickly replied Louise, "can't you let my poor faults alone?"

Louise was now evidently quite vexed at Georgie, and though Georgie modified her remark and endeavored to resume conversation, Louise would reply only in monosyllables. Feeling thus she retired for the night, prayerless and comfortless.

Georgie resumed her writing, and it was long past midnight ere she ceased. Then taking up a little Bible, a mother's dying gift, she hurriedly read a few verses, and in the same manner knelt and repeated the short prayers her mother had taught her in childhood. As she rose, her attention was directed to Louise, who was sleeping, but who had evidently been weeping. Stoop- ing down she softly kissed her, then turning aside, said, half for Louise, half for herself, "Ah, me! this is a weary world."

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Ten o'clock on the broad Atlantic ocean, found the staunch steamer Alabama swiftly moving o'er the waves. The moonlight leaped and danced over the shining surface of the ocean, and rested on the saddened face of Mr. Huntingdon, who paced leisurely up and down the promenade deck. Sometimes he stopped, and gazed at the clear, glossy surface before him, or above into the blue ether, where moved on, serenely calm, the cold pale moon. The soothing quietness oppressed him, for a still, small voice, whispered, "God! God above, God below, God in space, in beauty, in sublimity." The feeling gained upon him, and finally, unable to crush or dispel it, he turned from nature's most holy calm, and quickly entered the saloon below; but the bright lights and gilded panels, glared painfully on his heaven-pictured vision, and loud tones and boisterous laughter, were harsh discord to his ear.

Passing quickly on, he joined Mrs. H. in her state-room. As he entered, he saw she was engaged in prayer, and impelled by an influence he could not resist, he knelt quietly by her, and softly whispered, "Maggie, pray for me!"

The words were low, and softly, sweetly uttered; but he caught, "Jesus, husband, Bessie, my stricken lamb, make them Thine own."

Soon sweetly slept the mother, slept the child
watched over by angel bands, while the father
and husband, weary with thought, and pining for
rest, sought it, but found none.

CHAPTER V.

THE next day was the Sabbath, and when Mrs. Livingston arose, she found that the rest of the family were still asleep. Seven o'clock passed, and eight, and it was nearly nine, when, tired of waiting for a summons to breakfast, she descended to the breakfast room, and there found Bessie feeding her canary bird.

"Good morning, aunty," said Bessie, as she entered, "You are a late riser."

"No, my child," replied she, "it is a long time since I rose. It is you and your sisters who are the late risers."

"Yes," replied Bessie, "We never rise on Sundays till half-past eight, and breakfast about nine. I wish we had breakfast earlier though, because I have to hurry so much to get ready for church, and I don't like to go all in a flutter."

"No, I should think not," returned Mrs. L., "and it is wrong thus to indulge in unnecessary sleep on the blessed Lord's Day, when He rose so early from the tomb. I think I must try and see if I cannot have a change in this respect."

Louise and Miss Noble now entered. Louise seemed to have forgotten her vexation of the previous evening, and greeted her aunt in a warmer manner than usual, or else she had determined to profit by her cousin's reproof.

They waited some time for Edward and Margaret, but as they did not make their appearance, and breakfast was in readiness, they seated themselves. Mrs. L., without remark, bowed her head, and asked a blessing, and then quietly commenced serving the table. Edward now entered, and inquired immediately for Margaret.

"Better go up and see where she is," said he to Bessie.

Bessie left the room instantly, but soon returned, saying, as she entered, "Margaret is sick, with one of her severe headaches."

"Well, she might know it would be so," replied Edward. "I wish she had more common sense. She has'nt eaten one mouthful since yesterday morning; enough to give any one the headache."

"She did eat some toast, and drank a little tea last evening," observed Mrs. L.

"Ah!" said Edward, "Well, then, she didn't sleep well; she is subject to nervous headaches when she overworks herself, or becomes excited, and knowing it, I think she ought to be more careful of herself."

"We all know the right way," quietly replied Mrs. L., "but sometimes we find it hard to pursue it."

"Yes, that's true," returned Edward, taking a very long sip of coffee.

The conversation after this, was very slight, and Mrs. Livingston excused herself as soon as possible, and going to Margaret's room, found her suffering, indeed, with a very painful headache.

"Can I be of any use to you," said she to Margaret, while resting her hand on Margaret's head, which she had tightly bound with her handkerchief.

"No, I thank you," replied Margaret, "It will soon get better if I can sleep."

Just then Edward entered, and a sudden change seemed to pass over him, for, stooping down, he kissed Margaret, and said, in an affectionate tone, "Margaret, drive this headache away as quick as you can ; I miss you down stairs. Would you like to have me smooth your hair for you ? "

A tear trickled down Margaret's cheek, for her nerves were very excitable, and he had touched a tender chord. Sighing, she replied, "Perhaps, if I don't feel better, you may after church ; I think I can sleep now."

"Well, then, to sleep," and he pressed her eye lids softly down ; then turning to Mrs. Livingston,

he said, "I'll accompany you to church this morn. We can't do anything for Margaret, and Miss Noble will be at home."

When Edward returned from church, he found Margaret lying upon the lounge in the library. She looked pale and languid; but a faint effort at a smile was visible upon her face, as he came forward and said, "Well done, Margaret, I'm glad to see you down stairs, and how's your head?" and he sat down beside her, and commenced smoothing her hair.

"Much better," replied she, "I believe I can go to church this afternoon."

"Go to church! what do you mean?" said Mrs. Livingston, who was looking at some books in the library.

"Yes, that is just like her," said Edward, in the old bitter tone.

"Why not," replied Margaret, now rather shrinking from the touch of Edward's hand; "I am entirely free from pain."

"Well, if you are free from pain, you are weak, and need rest," observed Mrs. L.

"I don't see how it can be much worse for me to go to church, than to lie here, and—and—worry all the time, and be so lonely; and gasping, Oh! mother," she burst into tears, a very unusual thing for her.

Edward's heart was touched. He found that Margaret, his "iceberg sister" as he called her, had strong, deep feelings. He had heard her the night before, pacing her room, but he thought it was for a religious purpose she did it, and though he was tender to her before, it was a tenderness he felt it his duty to evince, now that his parents were away. But these words of Margaret were a new revelation of her heart to him, and he saw that her grief for the departure of her parents, was more deep than Bessie's or his own.

Mrs. Livingston was also touched, and together they comforted her. In a few moments she controlled herself, and said, "I think I had better go to my room; I shall be more quiet there."

"No, you will not," replied Edward, affectionately. "You must come out, and fill your place at dinner."

"I can't eat," said she, despairingly.

"Well, then, you can see us," returned he.

She demurred no longer, and silently acquiesced in Edward's arrangements. After they were seated, Edward was commencing, as usual, to serve without a blessing, when Miss Noble motioned to him about it in such a manner that he saw no way of escape, so crimsoning a little, he bowed to Mrs. Livingston, and just murmured, "Will you ask a blessing." Thus did she gain the victory!

After dinner, Edward returned with Margaret to the library, and declared his intention of remaining home to keep her company.

‘ I had rather you would n’t,’ said she.

“ But I shall,” said he, “ and moreover, I am going to read to you. I have a very interesting book in my room, I think you’ll like ;” and he started away for it, but he hesitated ere he reached the stairs, and decided, upon farther thought, that she would not like it ; then thought again, “ Well, I’ll try it anyway ; perhaps she will hear it, and it may drive away some of her foolish notions.” He procured the book he was reading the evening before, and returned to the library.

“ Let me see it,” said she, as he entered.

“ O, no matter,” replied he, “ It isn’t to *see* ; you hear me *read*.”

But his evading her in this manner only made her the more anxious to see it, and she said, “ Edward, I don’t wish to hear you read any book that you are not willing I should see.”

“ Well, see it, then,” replied he, good humoredly. “ And I wish you could only see the truth of it as easily as you can see its pages.”

She dropped it quickly, and with a shudder, said, “ Take it away, I do not wish to hear his writings.”

“ How narrow-minded and set you are,” re-

turned he, picking it up. "I should think you would wish to hear it, so as to know both sides."

"Satan has already taught me enough of the wrong side," responded Margaret, "and I do not wish to hear what he has taught other people."

"Do you call these Satanic teachings?"

"Yes, I do, though the evil is probably hidden in a charming garb."

"However, I should think you, with your pretensions, might read and get no harm," returned Edward.

"Enter not into temptation," responded Margaret.

"Well, what shall I read to you, then, for I am determined to please you."

"There is a book in my room, on my little table, called 'Self-Examination.' You may get it, if you will." Margaret asked him to read this, not only to please herself, but in hopes that it might lead him to see his errors. While Edward was passing up stairs, he met Mrs. L. and told her he was going to read to Margaret. He also mentioned the book she wished to hear, but Mrs. L. shook her head, and said,

"I will get you one of my books, and you tell her I sent it to her," and she handed to him a memoir of a young minister, which she thought would give Margaret healthy views of a Christian

life, as well as interest, and, perhaps, benefit Edward.

After Edward went down stairs, Mrs. L. passed into Margaret's room, and taking up the book on Self-Examination, wrote with a pencil on the inside cover, "For one look at self, take fifty looks at Christ"* then passed down stairs to the parlor.

As Edward returned into the Library, he handed the memoir to Margaret, saying, "Here, aunt Livingston sent you that to read."

Margaret slightly frowned at the change, and said, as she turned the leaves over, "I should rather read this on a week day."

"Why, what's the harm to read it to-day?"

"O, I see a good deal about worldly matters," said she.

"Then you think we ought not to have anything to do with the world Sundays. I should like to know how you think people are going to live, if they thrust the world out every seventh day. In fact they nor you can't do it; you must eat, drink, and use the world's goods."

"We can't help that," returned Margaret; "But this book tells of every day life, and I don't care to hear it to-day."

"Every day life, sanctified by religion," said Mrs. L., who had entered the room while Edward

*McCheyne.

was speaking, fearing that Margaret might object to the change. "It is a book which is perfectly proper for you to read to-day. Your mind now is too disturbed to hear anything of an abstruse nature, and the greater part of this will not require much thought. You can but be benefitted by the cheerful, living religion, here presented. Remember, my child, 'the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.' "

"That's a fact," responded Edward, warmly. "I'm glad you recognize it, aunt Livingston."

She smiled and said, "I presume, if I should be more definite in my ideas of the proper manner of spending the Sabbath, you and I would differ much more than Margaret and I."

"I should hope so," returned Margaret.

"Well, well," replied Edward, "now hear me read."

Mrs. Livingston soon left, and joined Bessie, who had decided to attend church twice that day.

The sweet smile of peace which rested on Bessie's face the night before, still lingered there, but intermingled with it was a thoughtful, earnest (sometimes troubled) look, indicative of the various workings of her heart. Her faithful minister noticed her presence and manner, and his heart was warmed, and faith quickened, as he saw the indications of the Spirit's power. He felt the

silent influence of the upturned, eager face, and his words took a more earnest tone, and touching pathos, than usual.

That evening was the Sabbath School Concert, and as Bessie passed out of the church, she determined to try to attend it. For two or three years she had remained away from it; in fact, no one of the Huntingdons had been in the habit of going, though Margaret of late would have attended, had the church not been so great a distance from her home, or her father been willing to trust her alone.

After tea, Bessie followed Edward to his room, and entering, said, "Ned, I have a great favor to ask of you."

"What is it? pet," said he, encircling her with his arm, and seating her on his knee.

"Why, as Bell is not at home, and you have no other good place, I think, to spend this evening, won't you go with me down to the church? I wish to attend the Sabbath School Concert."

"Why, Bessie, three times to church on Sunday! that will never do in the world; you'll be sick, certainly."

"Now, don't plague me; I want to go very much, and you will please me, won't you?"

"I don't know about that. I don't want to go to such a children's exhibition."

“But many grown people attend, and ‘they say’ these concerts are very interesting.”

“That may be to those parents who wish to see their darling children exhibit, but I have no such interest to attract me.”

“I’m sure the children only sing. I do not see much exhibition in that.”

“Well, perhaps there is not, but I can’t go, I have an engagement elsewhere; but see here, may be your aunt Livingston would like to go?”

“No, she don’t go out evenings; you know her health is not very good.”

“Well, then, you must stay at home. I guess two meetings will answer for one day.”

“But Edward —,” and tears filled the eyes of Bessie, and she said no more.

Tears — they softened Edward’s heart, and he said, “Come now! stop that;” and he tenderly kissed them away, and continued: “It seems to me you and Margaret are becoming great babies now-a-days. Why, I think I have seen more tears from you the last two or three days, than all your life before.”

“Yes, you have,” said Bessie, forcing back the coming ones; “but I’m sad and lonely, and—” She leaned back against Edward’s shoulder, while he, enfolding her more closely, smoothed her curls away, then said,

“And what, pet?”

“No matter now,” replied she, attempting to rise while he held her fast.

“O, I am not going to let you go just now,” returned he, “and upon further thought, I think you had better attend that concert; it will keep you from thinking so much. I’ll tell you what I will do: I will go down with you, and will leave you at the door, and will be in the entry waiting for you when the concert is finished.”

“Why wont you go in?” said Bessie.

“Because I can’t endure childrens’ affairs, I have told you. Come, you must be satisfied.”

“Well,” returned Bessie, knowing it was useless to urge him further.

Bessie’s pastor saw her as she entered, and he was more assured that she was, indeed, a seeker after divine things. For a long while she had been a favorite of his; he had marked her at school, saw the influence she exerted there, saw her by her mother’s couch, and witnessed the deep, solicitous affection, she possessed for her, and he longed to see the “merry-hearted creature” saddened, but saddened only by her sinfulness. Bessie took her seat in the back part of the vestry. She felt rather out of place, and when she seated herself, moved along behind a post that her pastor might not discover her. She imagined

what he would think, and her still proud heart, could not bear it just then.

After some opening exercises, each scholar repeated a verse from the Bible.

Much to Bessie's dismay, she found that the generality of the parents and friends also said one. "What shall I do," thought she; "the Lees, the Porters, and Mr. Leslie, will know I'm here; beside, I can't think of one."

Just then, a very familiar voice fell upon her ear, saying, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

She sat very quietly then, endeavoring to think of a verse; but "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life," still rang in her ears. Just in time, however, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," came to her mind, and without further thought, she said it, and he, Mr. Belmont, heard it, and the comforting words spoke volumes to his soul.

The pastor heard both, and again his heart was encouraged. He saw a little cloud in these public exponents of their feelings, and when he arose to address his congregation, his verse was "My soul doth magnify the Lord."

Tears often came to Bessie's eyes that evening, which distressed and annoyed her. She had ever been one of those who scorned such weaknesses, es-

pecially in public, and now that she found herself a martyr to it, her pride rebelled again and again; but do what she would, she could not hear of Christ with tearless eyes. The "foundation of her heart was, indeed, broken up," and glad was she, when the exercises concluded, to drop her veil, and pass quickly out, trusting to soon reach home, where she could give full vent to her feelings.

She looked in vain for Edward, but soon heard the familiar voice of Mr. Belmont, who said, advancing toward her,

"Miss Bessie, Edward has left you in my charge. I met him just as you parted from him, and promised to see you safely home. May I?"

"Thank you," returned Bessie, in an offended tone. "I suppose I shall be obliged to trouble you."

Mr. Belmont smiled, and said, "Trouble! I am only too glad of the opportunity. Don't be offended."

But Bessie was offended. She did not like Edward's easy manner of thus disposing of her, and with womanly feeling she resented it.

"Edward will always treat me like a child, I believe," said she, while turning the church corner, "if I live to be fifty years old."

"O, he's just like all brothers," replied Bel-

mont, "just as I suppose I should be to a sister if I had one. Don't think of it any more. How did you enjoy the meeting?"

Bessie's backward glance at that, brought up other feelings, and she answered, softly and sadly, "very much."

"Did you mean your verse for me?" questioned Belmont.

"I don't know," replied Bessie, a little evasively; and then the wiser prompting conquered, and she said, courageously, "Yes, I did, and I believe it."

"I wish I could," sighed Belmont, in reply.

"You can," returned she, "if you only will."

"Yes, there's the trouble," replied he.

"Yes, there *is* the trouble," said she; "it is so hard to believe."

"It's a very simple thing," returned Belmont, musingly.

"Yes," responded Bessie, "I have been thinking of it all day. By the way, were you at church this morning?"

"Not at ours," replied Belmont, "I went to hear D —, with a friend."

"Then you missed an excellent sermon," continued Bessie, "from the text, 'But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and

redemption.' Mr. Leslie laid the text open in a manner I shall never forget. Although a great portion of it was too deep for me to comprehend, yet still I saw very plainly, O, *how* much Christ could become to us ! ”

“ Made unto us, who believe on Him,” returned Belmont ; “ wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption — glorious, glorious promises ! O, Bessie, it must be blessed to thus find Christ. Do you know, I really am pining, am sick, I might say, for something outside of this unsatisfactory world. I have tried, and have become thoroughly satiated with the world’s pleasures ; I know they can never gratify these longings of my heart. Why, Bessie, was I created with such longings, if there is nothing to meet them ? And tell me where, or in what pursuit, can I find this satisfaction ? ”

“ In nothing but religion, it seems to me,” reverently replied Bessie.

“ I suppose you are right,” returned Belmont, mournfully ; “ but, Bessie, how to get it perplexes me. What must I *do* to inherit eternal life ? and then the doctrines, they puzzle me. I must get righted there first.”

“ The doctrines ! ” said Bessie, “ I think they will be all plain enough by-and-by ; it seems to me now we have nothing to do but believe. But

Oh ! don't ask poor, ignorant me for guidance, for I am in a sort of maze myself. Last night the way seemed very clear, and I could trust in Christ, but now it is darkened. Perhaps Satan is hedging it up before me."

"Then you believe he is constantly endeavoring to divert these good tendencies in us?"

"Yes, indeed. Does it not speak in the Bible of his going about 'as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.' Could a stronger figure be used, indicative of his persistent efforts for our ruin, than this?"

"No, indeed; but I rarely ever think of him. I feel it is the wickedness of my own heart which leads me astray."

"Well, I suppose our hearts do lead us astray; but then he and his angels are ever busy, constantly tempting us, and working upon the evil in our hearts. Do you not think so?"

"Yes, I suppose you are right; but Bessie, must we be always tempted thus?"

"Yes; must we not? and now I think of it, mother often repeated to me some verses touching that point; but they have escaped me just at this moment." Bessie hesitated a while, and then said, "Well, I can't recall the words, but the ideas were 'that even Jesus, as free from sin as he was, was tempted while on earth,' and we must

not expect to escape temptation ; but that if we rely on Christ, He will not suffer us to be tempted any more than we can bear, and will, in some way, provide an escape for us."

"Yes, I remember the verses," replied Belmont ; "but they never seemed as significant before. So, Bessie, it is your mother who has taught you. I have been wondering how you gained your knowledge of divine things. I was well taught, too, in my youth, but I have imbibed so much error and speculation since, that my mind is quite confused on Bible points."

"I do not know how it is," returned Bessie ; "but now mother is gone, her teachings all come up to me, and I can see their meaning and force much better than when she was with me."

"Very likely," said Belmont, "we often find that to be the case with the teachings and conversation of one's friends."

They had now nearly reached Bessie's home, and the conversation changed to other subjects. As Mr. Belmont bade Bessie good night, he asked, "When shall we have such an opportunity again ? I wish to talk more on this subject ?"

"O, some time," replied Bessie. "I shall be very anxious to know how you succeed. Why don't you go and see Mr. Leslie ?"

"See, Mr. Leslie ! I had not thought of that ;

but I'd rather not. He would 'nt understand me."

"I don't know why," returned Bessie.

No! Bessie could not understand why, nor could Mr. Belmont either have given a satisfactory reason. Like many others, he viewed the matter in a false light, and felt that his perplexities were too intricate, of too long standing for a man like himself to dispel. He did not consider that his pastor was taught of God, and that it was through the same wisdom he himself thought must be "so glorious," and which was given from above, that God's faithful servants could discern the sinner's errors, subterfuges, and excuses, Satan's temptations and insinuations, and point out the true way to the cross of Christ. No! Satan blinded him here most effectually, and the Holy Spirit which works by means, left him to grope in the darkness alone.

CHAPTER VII.

THE next morning, Bessie Huntingdon awoke from sleep with the consciousness that something unusual had happened to her. Gazing about the room to recall the event, her eye fell upon her mother's Bible, opened at the place where she had left it the evening before. Then quickly followed in her mind all the events of the past few days, and as she re-called them, and thought also that this day would begin her school life again, she shuddered, and clasping her hands, gazed imploringly upward, and murmured, "Oh! Father, help this little lamb, who is so very weak." Thoughtfully, she made her toilet, and thoughtfully, soon after breakfast, she proceeded to school.

She met her schoolmates in the hall, and was welcomed warmly by them, for they had missed her pleasant smiles and winning words, during her absence; besides, she was the link which united many varying temperaments. Now, timid Alice Cooledge could venture to join the bevy of young ladies talking so loudly and independently in one corner of the room, because she knew Bes-

sie would welcome her as she approached, and say something like "Alice, dear, come stand beside me," and shielded by her, Alice felt at ease. Kate Delano, too, a rude, honest spoken, but well meaning girl, was another one that Bessie bound, by her natural tact, to the "circle," which is found in all schools. Kate was often in trouble, from her ill-timed, honest remarks; but when Bessie was present, she generally turned them in such a manner, that often no bad effect was produced.

Now Kate rushed forward to her, and shaking her hand, said, "O, Bessie Huntingdon, how rejoiced I am to see you; the girls have all been abusing me during your absence."

"Why, what have you done," replied Bessie, "to provoke so much abuse?"

"Spoken the truth, that's all," said Kate.

"What she considers truth," interposed Jennie Duncan. "If we all regarded truth as Kate does, and make such a public proclamation of it, we should soon get into a pretty snarl."

"How well it is, then," returned Bessie, "that we don't all think and speak alike. Ah! '*la petite* Alice,' here you are," said she, as the timid girl advanced blushing towards her. "Have you missed me any?"

"Missed you!" and Alice's reproving look told Bessie only too well how much her brief absence had been felt by one, at least.

Bessie wound her arm about her as usual, and Alice softly whispered, "Bessie, I have thought of you a great deal while you have been away, and have pitied you so much. I saw you last night at the concert. Are you happy?"

"Yes, dear; do I not look so?" replied Bessie, gazing at her with a beaming smile.

"Oh! do stop your everlasting cooing," said Kate Delano. "Really it's been quite refreshing—" but here the sound of the school bell interrupted her, and with a slight look of pretended disgust to finish her remarks, Kate turned to her seat.

As Bessie passed to hers, she greeted her teacher, who did not fail to notice how peculiarly tranquil she appeared. The Bible lesson, which immediately followed, was very interesting, and Madame Clark made a personal application of it with regard to carrying religion into the little acts of life. Bessie gave strict attention to all that she said, and it was with deep earnestness that she silently joined in a portion of the prayer which followed the lesson, that "all might carry the Spirit of Christ into their daily acts, their lessons, their conversations, recitations, deportment, and whatever they might think or do," so that, concluded the teacher, "Whether, therefore, we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we may do it all to the glory of God."

As Bessie passed to a recitation soon after, Jennie Duncan made signs to her for a pencil, but instead of handing her one as she usually would, she passed on without saying a word, or making a sign, but when she reached the class she gave her a smile, while Jennie in return, shrugged her shoulders, and gave her a very significant look. As Bessie expected, at recess Jennie assailed her with,

“Well done, Bessie Huntingdon! who would have believed you could have been so selfish as to deny me a bit of pencil. I did not think it of you.”

“Jennie,” said Bessie, quietly, “You know better than that.”

“Don’t I say the truth,” returned Jennie.

“The truth in one respect, that I did not give you my pencil; but untruth in another, that I was actuated by selfishness.”

“Why, you don’t mean to say,” continued Jennie, “that you were actuated by benevolence, by your refusal of it when you knew I needed it so much. I call it selfishness. Now, if you had just dropped it on my desk, or left it on your own, where I could have reached it, you would not have communicated, and I should have been perfect in my French lesson. As it was, I received four errors for failing to have it ready, and I charge them all to you.”

“Jennie,” replied Bessie, in a trembling tone, for she felt the time of confession had come, and she must now take a new stand, “You know one of the rules of school is, that ‘no young lady shall borrow pencils, of her neighbor,’ and if you had no right to borrow, I certainly had no right to lend; and besides I should have communicated, and I do not wish to violate now the least rule. The time past, I wish you to forget. I hope in future to be a more conscientious pupil. You understand me, do you not, Jennie?” and Bessie glanced lovingly towards her, her eyes filled with tears.

“I suppose so,” said Jennie, turning round, and gazing out of the hall window, “But really it seems to me ‘straining at a gnat.’”

“Perhaps it will not always seem so,” returned Bessie. “Don’t you know Madame said this morning we should remember how great a power there is in what we call little acts, for in them lies the principle of right and wrong?”

“No, I don’t remember it,” replied Jennie, in a pettish tone; “I scarcely ever hear any of her long lectures, besides I don’t wish to be so conscientious; I should be unhappy all the time. I don’t believe in tormenting one’s self so much.”

“There is no torment to me,” responded Bessie, “in doing right; it is doing wrong that gives me torment.”

"Well, you know what I mean," said Jennie, in return; "it's troublesome, and I don't care for such trouble; time enough by-and-by."

Bessie was just about to reply, when they were interrupted by some of the school girls, to her regret, but to Jennie Duncan's satisfaction, for the conversation had become altogether too personal to please her.

During the morning, Bessie had many occasions to evince her desires to do right, and she was painfully surprised to find how far from conscientious she had been heretofore, in little things. It was quite an effort for her, and she returned home in a discouraged frame of mind, feeling that it would be a very hard task to ever keep such a watch over herself. As she entered the house, she met Mrs. Livingston, who observed her dejection, and said, "Bessie, what is the trouble? You look sad."

"Do I," said Bessie, "Well, I feel so. I have discovered this morning, more than ever, how wicked I am, and how prone to do wrong; and it looks very discouraging to me, conquering all these sinful habits of mine."

"Do you expect you can do it?"

"No, aunty, I fear not, I am so weak. One that had more strength of character than I might; but I cannot. Oh! what shall I do, for I cannot bear to do wrong?"

Mrs. Livingston now sat down beside her, on the sofa, upon which Bessie had seated herself when she entered, and taking Bessie's hand in hers, she said,

"No, Bessie, you nor I, nor any one else, can do this great work of conquering sin in the heart. The strongest of us are very, very weak, and utterly unable to make ourselves what we see we ought to be ; but He, the Holy Spirit, will 'work in you both to will and to do.' You must trust in Christ to overcome sin in your heart, just as you have trusted Him to save you from sin, and you do trust your sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, do you not ?"

"Yes, aunty, though occasionally doubting thoughts arise ; but I do not like them, and check them instantly. Sometimes it seems to me as though it was Satan tempting me."

"I do not doubt it," returned Mrs. Livingston ; "and now let me tell you of some good rules which I have read concerning temptation :

'1. A sinful impression, or suggestion, resisted till it disappears, is temptation, and only temptation — not sin.

'2. A sinful suggestion, courted or tolerated, or at length complied with, is sin.'

"But do not be discouraged, my child ; all you have to do, is to simply trust Jesus and His pow-

er, and that alone will overcome sin in your heart. He will give you of His pure and truthful nature, and take away this proneness to sin, if *you earnestly desire and seek for it*. ‘Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.’ Do not you see it is the reigning power in the heart which influences you, and the more you have of Christ in your heart, the more you will exhibit of him in your life. ‘Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.’ ”

“Oh! aunty,” returned Bessie, “what light you have given me; that I am to let Christ conquer all this bent to wrong, which I find in myself. I thought I had to do it, and I felt it was impossible; but now I am all hope, for He who is all-powerful can do it, and He will do it I know, for He has promised to. But, Oh! I tremble to think that He, the Holy One, has come and taken up His abode in such a poor, sinful worm. Precious, precious Saviour! I never can praise Him enough.”

Mrs. Livingston now arose, and kissing Bessie’s forehead, said, “Even so, Bessie, ‘Unto you, therefore, which believe, He is precious,’ ” and passed out of the room.

They did not meet again until dinner, and then Mrs. Livingston saw how discordant was the con-

versation to Bessie. It was on the fashions and frivolities of the day, and was carried on principally by Louise, and an intimate friend of hers, Bell Rivers, the affianced of Edward. Bessie glanced once at Mrs. Livingston to see how she was pleased, and how she could endure it. Mrs. Livingston caught her look, and answered it by an upward glance, and Bessie knew what she would have said could she have spoken. "Trust, trust, He can give you grace to endure all things," and she trusted, and found it was not in vain.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE afternoon of this same day, Louise Huntingdon and Bell Rivers, were interrupted in the midst of a private conversation upon some of Louise's flirtations, by a servant who brought a note of invitation for the Huntingdons to a private ball, at the house of a friend of theirs, for the next week.

"O dear!" said Louise, "how unfortunate! I have not a single presentable dress, and this will be a grand affair, I know, for it is probably complimentary to Miss Reynolds, the young lady visiting at the Sargents. What shall I do?"

"Buy a new one," said Bell.

"But I can't," replied Louise; "My next allowance is not due until the last of next month, and I have spent all of this quarter's, but seven dollars, and I don't believe 'the girls' have any to lend me."

"Charge it," returned Bell; "'Davenport, Wayne Brothers,' or any of those firms would be glad to do it."

"O, no," replied Louise, "I could n't do that; Pa would never forgive me."

“ Fie ! how silly you are ; he would never know it, and you could pay it up just as soon as you get your allowance ; beside, if he should happen to find it out, he wouldn’t mind it just for once.”

“ I don’t know about that,” said Louise ; “ but I must go, I must have a dress ; I wouldn’t miss this ball for anything. I know all of ‘ our set ’ will be there, and it will be a brilliant affair. Yes, I must go, somehow.”

“ I suppose its no use to ask Ned, for he is just as fussy as your father on some points,” continued Bell ; “ sometimes I get all out of patience with him.”

“ No, it’s no use to ask him,” replied Louise ; “ he would think the dresses I have good enough, and I don’t wish to borrow it of any of them, anyhow ; I don’t like to be under obligations. Perhaps I will charge it ; but dear me ! how shall I manage it ? They will wonder how I have got the dress, for Margaret and Bessie know how much money I have.”

They both remained silent a while, then Bell said, quickly, “ I have it, I have it ; trust this child for planning. I will lend you two or three dollars, which is all I can spare, and then when they ask you where you got the money for your dress, you can say, ‘ Bell lent me some, and i had some of my own,’ and both together will pay for

trimmings, making, &c., and you can charge the material."

"Yes, that will do," returned Louise, in a hesitating manner, showing that her conscience was not quite at ease; but crushing back its monitions, she said again, more strongly, "Yes, I will do it; I am not obliged to account for all my proceedings to them."

"Sure enough," replied Bell, "you are nearly old enough now to be your own mistress, I should think. I would get one right off, if I were you. Suppose we go down town, and look for something this afternoon?"

"Well, I will," responded Louise; "but wait a moment till I give this invitation to Margaret, and then I can tell her what I intend to do."

Passing into the hall, Louise entered Margaret's room, and tossing her the billet, said, "An invitation to the Sargents. Am I not unfortunate though, I have nothing suitable to wear, and have not sufficient money of my own to purchase a new dress; but Bell has offered to lend me some, so that I think I can get one by managing carefully. We are going out this afternoon to look for one."

"Louise, I think you are very extravagant," replied Margaret, "for either of your light silks would do to wear. And I would n't borrow of Bell either; I don't believe father would like it."

“How foolish you are ! just as though I should appear out in those old dresses again. I declare ! you don’t know anything about propriety ; and as to borrowing of Bell, I don’t see a speck of harm in it, and father will never know, unless you take pains to tell him. I really think, Margaret, I am about old enough to manage for myself.” So saying, Louise walked quickly out of Margaret’s room, shutting the door behind her rather violently.

“What did she say ? ” inquired Bell.

“The same old song she always sings,” replied Louise, “that it is extravagance to buy a new dress.”

“She is terribly particular, is n’t she ? ” returned Bell, “since she joined the church.”

“Yes, indeed,” replied Louise ; “She makes herself a perfect torment to us ; but come, put on your hat, and get ready, for it’s late now ? ”

Nearly an hour afterwards, Louise and Bell entered the extensive store of Davenport & Co., and soon busied themselves in selecting just the shade of pink silk which Louise thought would be becoming to her.

As Bell had said, the clerk was indeed pleased to open an account with Miss Huntingdon and “hoped she would call whenever she wished anything ; he should be exceedingly happy to furnish

it to her. Ordering the dress she had purchased sent home, Louise and Bell left the store, but had proceeded but a few steps ere they met Edward, in company with a gentleman, a stranger to themselves. The stranger simply bowed to the ladies, and turned immediately into an adjoining store, while Edward joined his sister and Miss Rivers on their walk home.

“Who was that *distingué* gentleman with you, Edward?” inquired Louise.

“A Mr. Carleton,” replied Edward. “He was a class-mate of mine, but I have not seen him for three or four years, as he has been in Europe. He will stop in town this winter, and will call at our house to-morrow evening, so you must do your best to entertain him. He is very particular in his choice of lady acquaintances.”

“Well, then Louise wont suit him,” replied Bell, “he will more likely prefer Bessie, or your staid sister Margaret.”

“We shall see,” returned Louise, “I can be very quiet and lady-like some times.”

“An exceedingly rare occurrence,” responded Edward, and then continued, “but where have you been girls?”

“Oh, only into —” here Louise quickly checked Miss Rivers by pulling her dress.

“Where, did you say?” still questioned Edward.

“Into Delano & Co.’s to see Meston’s new picture,” returned Bell, and then turning her head she glanced triumphantly at Louise, but Louise’s face wore no such look, but rather one of anxiety and pain. Miss Rivers pressed her hand to assure her, and then instantly changed the conversation. Louise was very silent all the way home, and as soon as she reached the house, she went directly to her room, and Bell followed her.

“Oh, Bell!” anxiously exclaimed Louise, as soon as she closed the door, “how could you say we had been into Delano’s?”

“Why, what should I have said?” impatiently returned Bell. “I am sure we were in there this morning. I thought you pulled my dress, so that I should not tell him that we had been into Davenport’s, and I said the first thing that came into my mind. I don’t know as we are under any obligation to tell him every place we go to. I am sure you may be thankful it was no worse; it was only a ‘white lie,’ after all, and people tell such every day. Besides it was no worse than the one you told Margaret to-day about procuring the money for your dress.”

“Well, I don’t know as it is,” replied Louise,

"though there was more truth in what I said to her. But dear me! I wish I had never thought of having a dress. I know I shall have more trouble yet about it. I have been thinking coming home what I shall tell them if they ask me where I purchased it. You know we never trade into Davenport's; that was the reason why I did not wish you to tell Edward. But I won't deceive again, and if they ask me I shall say into Davenport's, and if they wonder, they may. Don't you speak about it any way."

"Just as you please," responded Bell, "I am sure I only said what I did for your sake."

"Well, I know it, replied Louise, and I am sure you are very kind to be so interested in my affairs, but Bell, it's miserable to manage such ways. I'll never do it again, I assure you, for I would not suffer for another half hour what I have this afternoon."

"Pooh! Louise," returned Bell, "you are too squeamish."

"No, I am not," replied Louise, quite energetically. "I cannot regard such things as you do. I never did such a thing before, and had I imagined I was to be so troubled about it, I would not have bought the dress, I assure you. No one knows, either, how much unhappiness it will yet cause me."

“ Well, it can’t be helped now,” responded Bell ; “ and the best thing for you to do is to forget it as soon as possible, so let us go down to the parlor.”

But in vain, all that evening, and many days after, was Louise haunted by the recollection of her wrong doing. Fortunately no inquiries were made by the family concerning the dress, which she could not truthfully answer, without betraying herself. There came a day though, when it was all known !

CHAPTER IX.

THE next few days found Bessie Huntingdon in great perplexity of mind. Her feelings did not exactly incline her to attend the ball at the Sargents, but her brother was so anxious and imperative in his request that she should go, that it made her very unhappy and undecided. Finally she sought Mrs. Livingston and asked for her counsel.

“Why do you ask me for advice?” said Mrs. Livingston, in reply to her question. “You know very well what I would say to you.”

“That I had better remain at home,” said Bessie, while Mrs. Livingston bowed in acquiescence. “Yes, I thought you would say so, but I wish to know your reasons for it!”

“Do they not suggest themselves to you?” inquired Mrs. Livingston.

“Yes, I presume some of them do,” returned Bessie, “but still I want to hear you tell them.”

“Well, I feel that public gatherings of such a nature as the one you will attend at the Sargents

are always objectionable, but especially for you in your present state of mind."

"Why, aunty, you would n't have me leave the world entirely, would you, because I am interested in religion."

"No," replied Mrs. L., "not at all, but I would not have you enter into temptation any time, and surely not now when Satan is more than ever seeking to lead you astray."

"Why more than ever?" questioned Bessie. "Because that you have now commenced to follow Christ. When you were asleep and indifferent to His call, Satan was well pleased to have you sleep, but now he finds you are escaping from the bondage under which he has held you, he will not fail to use all his arts to lead you astray."

"But why shall I find so many temptations there? It seems to me I find more in thinking of it, and what I shall wear, than when I shall be there."

"Just so," replied Mrs. L., "he would like to drive all thoughts of Christ from your mind for the next two or three days if he could, and that by such paltry things as dress, dancing.

By deciding not to go, this temptation would be removed."

"But, aunty, Edward will be very much dis-

pleased if I do not go. He says I must, and if I go for his sake to make him happy, is it wrong?"

"We are not required to commit wrong, Bessie, in order to make others happy."

"But I am not quite sure it is wrong. You know it is not a public ball, it is only a dancing party at a private house, and besides many good church people will be there, I know, and they don't see harm in it."

"Do you think because they are in the church, Bessie, that makes all they do right? Do you not remember the verse which says, 'Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' Does not this show that there will be many *in* the church who are not *of* the church. Let me ask you one question, Do you consider it consistent for a Christian who has renounced the pomps and vanities of this world, to spend some three or four days preparing for a festive occasion; her heart so entirely engrossed by thoughts of it, as almost to exclude everything sacred, and then to pass nearly a whole night in frivolity and vanity, seeking no good but the gratification of selfish desires, returning home at last to waste nearly all

of the precious hours of the next morning in sleep, and when awake to commence languidly the same feelings of the preceding days in retrospection? Now tell me, Bessie, is such a course consistent for a meek and lowly follower of the Lamb, and what good is there gained by it all."

"None at all," returned Bessie sighing, "but surely it is not wrong for friends to meet together to enjoy each others society."

"No," replied Mrs. Livingston, "We all need recreation, and I approve of these gatherings when they are conducted properly, and the time is passed in an innocent and sensible manner."

"Well, aunty," said Bessie, "I suppose you must be right, I wish I could feel so, and be at rest. I am so unhappy about it. Then, if I do decide not to go, how can I tell Edward?"

"Go to your heavenly Father," tenderly responded Mrs. L., "and He will direct you and give you strength for it all, 'As thy days so shall thy strength be.'"

Bessie immediately sought her own room, and bowing in prayer, confidently told her heavenly Guide, all her heart, just how perplexed she was, how anxious to please her brother, but above all to please Him, and besought Him to guide her into all truth.

Then arising she sat herself down to reflect. As she sat there silently weighing the arguments for and against, and still praying to be directed, it all came clearly up before her, that she had been really desiring to please her brother rather than God, and that the happiness she would afford him would not after all be pure. She saw, too, how much money she would waste to adorn her person which might be put to a better purpose, how much time also in preparing for the ball and attending it, and how it would unfit her for the next day's duties both in mind and body. It certainly does not improve my mind in the least, continued she, reasoning to herself; in fact degrades it; but above all, such places are debasing to the soul, leading one's thoughts away from God and purity, to self, the world and earthly pleasures. I should not dare to ask my Saviour to go with me, and ought I to attend any place where I cannot ask for His presence? Surely not; then, I must remain at home, and I will, and bowing her head she softly murmured, "Oh! my Father, give me strength to abide by my decision."

After a little more thought and silent prayer, Bessie returned to Mrs. Livingston and said, "Aunty, I have decided fully not to go. The Lord has shown me my duty very plainly now,

and I wonder I have been so blind to it for so long. Still I feel it is going to be a great trial to tell Edward. He will think I am very foolish, and will not see any sense in my reasons."

"Very like," returned Mrs. L., "but, Bessie, you will find if you mean to live a Christian life, you will be obliged very often to differ from him, and you must not shrink at the commencement of the warfare."

Tears filled Bessie's eyes as she considered this, and she could not reply for a few moments, then she said, "God help me to do right, and lead brother to Him."

"Yes, Bessie, He will, if you only have faith to plead earnestly for him."

Both were silent awhile, then, Bessie said, "Aunty, how glad I am that Edward has gone away, and won't return till Monday ; it would be so hard to keep refusing him all the time."

"Yes, it makes it much easier for you, and you should feel grateful to the Lord for this," responded Mrs. Livingston, "all our times are in His hands you know."

"Yes," replied Bessie, "and how sweet it is to think so. That is one of mother's texts, "My times are in thy hand," and, now I think of it, I mean to write to her all about this matter ; O, how much I have to tell her !" and, leaving the room Bessie was soon absorbed in letter communion.

The day of the ball arrived. Many were the cruel comments and jeers that Bessie had had to endure since her decision, from Louise and Georgie, and she awoke Thursday, trembling to meet her brother, for she was well aware how displeased he would be with her. She hardly knew at what time he would enter the house, and every now and then would fancy that she heard his footstep. She attended school as usual, but it was a very hard task for her to place her mind on her lessons. At recess, she had again to endure remonstrances and unpleasant remarks from some of her school friends, who found she really was not going, and when she returned home she was fairly sick from agitation and worryment.

Fearing to meet Edward, she entered the house by a back entrance, and proceeded directly to her room, where, fastening the door, she flung herself in tears on to her bed,—but was disturbed immediately by Louise, who, knocking at the door, said, “Bessie, are you here? for I have a note and a package from Edward for you. He is not coming home to dinner, business or something detains him.”

“Not coming home to dinner.” Ah! what sweet relief, those words were to Bessie. Springing up she unfastened the door, and took the package and note, but made no remark to Louise,

who said tenderly while she was returning, ‘down stairs,’ “Bessie dear, don’t cry. Make haste ! you can get ready to go to the party even now. You had better, for Edward will be very angry with you, and you don’t know what he has sent you there.”

Bessie closed the door and opened the package and found a beautiful pearl necklace. She brushed away the fast coming tears, and hushed the violent throbbings of her heart, then opened the note and read,

“MY PET, — I send you these sweet pearls just like your own self to wear to-night. DeCoutor, as I wrote Louise, will be at the house at 4 o’clock, to dress your hair, and I shall bring the flowers with me when I come home. I can’t come to dinner. Now make yourself as pretty as possible, for I intend to introduce you to one or two of my particular friends from D——, to-night, who expect to be at the ball.
Yours in haste,

NED.”

Ah ! how the tears came, and how Bessie’s heart did beat. “Oh ! what shall I do ? what shall I do ?” cried she, arising and walking up and down the room, her hands folded tightly around the box of pearls. “Oh ! Lord help me, help me !” and thus weeping and praying, she passed many times up and down the room, till exhausted, she sank upon the bed and sobbed her weary self to troubled sleep.

The summons for dinner awoke her, and when she raised her head, she found it pained her so severely she could not rise. She laid it back quietly again on the pillow for a while, to hush its throbbings, but in vain; and touching the bell above her, she hid her face in the pillow, moaning with pain.

A servant immediately came, and Bessie sent for her aunt.

"Why, Bessie," said she, as she entered, "are you sick?"

"Oh! my head aches so hard," returned she.

"Poor child!" said Mrs. Livingston, and she smoothed her hair, and felt of her hands and pulse. "How long has it ached so?"

"Only since I woke up," replied Bessie. "I expect it is because I have been crying so much."

Mrs. Livingston made no inquiry for the cause of her tears; she divined what it was, and felt how bitter and great it was to the fresh, joyous nature before her. After tenderly administering some simple remedies to Bessie, she seated herself by her side, and bathed her heated head with cold water. Soon the throbbing head was quite stilled, and Bessie slept again, to awake at five o'clock, refreshed and calmed.

Mrs. L. was in the room when she awoke, and said to her, "You must be very calm now, and

keep quiet, if you do not wish your head to ache again."

"Yes, I will," replied Bessie; "but has Edward returned yet?"

"No," responded Mrs. Livingston, "and if you wish, I will see him for you when he does come, as you are so unwell."

"I should like to see him myself very much," said Bessie. "I feel quite brave about it now. I do believe the Lord has given me strength."

"I do not doubt it," replied Mrs. L. "He always gives us strength for all he calls us to do."

They were silent a while, then Bessie said, "O, aunty, I know now how I will do; strange I have not thought of it before."

"Why, how will you do?" inquired Mrs. L.

"I will write to him, then he cannot interrupt me before I say all I wish to, and he will get calm before he sees me. You know he gets very excited when he is angry, and says many things he does not mean. Do you not think it would be a good way?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. L., "if you feel able to do it, and it will not make your head ache again."

"I don't believe it will," responded Bessie, "it is so free from pain now."

"I wouldn't write but a short note," said Mrs. L. "You can tell him what else you wish to say some other time."

"Just so," replied Bessie; and then rising, she prepared herself slowly to write. As she passed her bureau, she saw the box of pearls and Edward's note.

"Poor Edward!" said she, glancing at her aunt, and then at the box of pearls. "Have you seen them?"

"Yes," returned Mrs. L., "I examined them when you were asleep. They are beautiful; but you have found a richer pearl than they. Do you not think so?"

"Yes, yes, aunty dear. O, it seems so sweet to me now! my heart is full of love. I feel just like writing to Edward, and I mean to tell him that."

And thus she wrote :

BROTHER DEAR,—I thank you very much for the beautiful pearls you have given me; and my heart is full of love to you, as I think how kind and thoughtful you are ever towards your Bessie. And now feeling all this love for you, I am going to give you great pain. I am so sorry to give you this pain; but for the sake of Him who loves me more than you do, and who has given me the "matchless pearl without price," I do it.

Brother — *I cannot go to the ball to-night!* I have prayed over it, wept many tears, and have given it much earnest reflection, and have fully decided it would not be right to go! Christ is in my heart, I know, and I could not attend this ball, and feel I had His presence to go with me. It is not that I do not wish to please you, brother; but that I wish to

please Christ more, that I have done this. Do not, then, feel displeased, I beseech of you ; but forgive, and ever love, your own

BESSIE.

“ Will that do ? ” said she passing it to Mrs. Livingston to read.

Mrs. Livingston perused it, and replied, “ Yes, Bessie ; it is all that is needed, and God make it an instrument of good to his soul.”

“ How shall I get it to him ? ” continued Bessie. “ He will come right up here when he comes in.”

“ I will watch for him, and give it to him myself,” replied Mrs. Livingston. “ I think you had better lie down again ; your cheeks are quite flushed.”

“ Yes, and my head aches some,” said Bessie ; “ it is not so very strong after all.”

“ I feared it would not be,” returned Mrs. L. “ Yes, you lie down, and when he comes to the door I will tell him you are not well, and will give him the note.”

It was not long before Bessie and Mrs. Livingston heard Edward’s voice, saying, in reply to Louise, who had met him, and informed him regarding Bessie,

“ Bessie sick ! and not going to the ball ; its a burning shame ! All Mrs. Livingston’s doings, I know.”

“Hush!” said Louise.

Edward came on up stairs, and knocked rather impatiently at Bessie’s door.

Mrs. Livingston, calming herself after the feeling roused by Edward’s remark, and glancing at Bessie’s anxious face with an assuring smile, now took up the note, and opening the door, handed it to Edward, saying, “Bessie is not very well, and she wishes me to give you this.”

“Isn’t she well enough to see me,” abruptly returned he, while taking the note.

“No, brother dear, not now,” said Bessie, so sweetly and tenderly, that he made no farther remark, and passed on to his room.

Bessie neither saw nor heard from him again that night, as she did not appear at tea. She heard him descend though, when the carriage drove up, and caught the sound of Georgie and Louise’s voices, but his was silent.

As the carriage rolled away, she turned her head on the pillow, and glancing upward, softly murmured these words she had learned to repeat to her mother in childhood, little thinking how preciouslly applicable they would be to herself one day :

“Jesus! I my cross have taken,
All to leave, and follow thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou, from hence, my all shall be.

Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought, or hoped, or known;
Yet, how rich is my condition,
God and Heaven are still my own.

“ Let the world despise and leave me,
They have left my Saviour, too;
Human hearts and looks deceive me:
Thou art not, like them untrue.
Oh! while thou dost smile upon me,
God of wisdom, love and might;
Foes may hate, and friends disown me,
Show thy face, and all is bright.

“ Perish earthly fame and treasure,
Come disaster, scorn and pain;
In thy service, pain is pleasure,
With thy favor, life is gain:
Oh! 'tis not in grief to harm me,
While thy love is left to me;
Oh! 't were not in joy to charm me,
Were that joy unmixed with Thee.”

CHAPTER X.

THE next morning Bessie met Edward, as she was descending to the dining-room.

“Good morning, Bessie,” said he, coolly, “how do you find yourself this morning?”

“A great deal better,” replied Bessie, as cheerfully as she could, for her sensitive nature marked too well the change in his manner.

Edward made no further attempt at conversation, but whistling a gay, dancing air, passed on to the dining-room. Bessie followed. Her face, though, had its wonted smile when she entered, and Mrs. Livingston received an unusual morning welcome.

Louise and Georgie did not arise for breakfast, and it was rather a silent family which gathered around the table, as Edward, who generally led the conversation, was evidently in ill-humor, and the rest could not seem to find a topic. Even Mrs. Livingston's tact failed her.

Suddenly, Edward laid down his knife and fork with a great deal of impatience, and exclaimed, “What a stupid fellow I am! I received a letter

from father yesterday, and I was so busy I forgot all about giving it to you."

"From father!" said Bessie, springing up. "O, where is it? Let me get it; I can't wait one moment. Mother! mother dear, how is she?"

Margaret's eyes were flashing, and she said, indignantly, before Bessie finished speaking, "Can it be possible, Edward Huntingdon, that you have been so thoughtless? It's a burning shame!"

Bessie stopped, and drew quietly back, for she saw the rising passion in Edward's eyes, and waited tremblingly while he said, in compressed, severe tones, "Margaret Livingston! how dare you accuse me of thoughtlessness about father? You know well enough, it was only because I was so crowded with business last night that I forgot it."

"Great business a ball is," replied Margaret, her heart still swelling with indignation.

"Don't! don't!" said Bessie, laying her hand upon Margaret's arm, while Edward instantly replied, hardly able to control himself,

"It was not the ball, and you know it! You had better been there yourself, making other people happy, than staying at home making believe good. Pretty kind of goodness that is, which gets in a rage over such a little thing.

"I have a perfect right," said Margaret, "to be angry with you for such a thoughtless deed,

and you know perfectly well, if it had not been for the ball, we should have had the letter. Where is it? I hope, surely, this will be the last time."

But Edward had not heard her last words, for beckoning to Bessie, he had passed out of the room, saying, as he departed, in sarcastic tones, "Go on, go on, in your lady-like abuse; it must be exceedingly pleasing to your aunt Livingston."

This lady was seated at the table, her eyes covered with her hands, silently praying. She had tried to throw oil on the troubled waters, but in vain, and sadly she turned to the only source of strength at such times.

Margaret was the first to speak, saying, "Surely, aunt, you feel as I do regarding Edward."

Mrs. Livingston removed her hand from her face, and said, feeling it was not the time to express her mind, "Margaret, I will tell you some other time how I feel. Bessie will be back in a moment, and we shall want to hear the letter."

Bessie soon returned, and handed it to Margaret.

"You read it," said Margaret, passing it back. "I do not feel like it."

Bessie sat down in a little low rocking chair, near by, and opening it, tenderly read it slowly through. It was not encouraging, and a heavy

weight seemed to have fallen on each heart as she finished it.

Not one word was said in reply, but Margaret arose — her face colorless and lips compressed — and tremblingly passed to Bessie. Taking the letter, she left the room.

“Oh! mother, dear mother!” said Bessie, folding both hands over her face as Margaret closed the door. “Oh! Mrs. Livingston, what a day! what a day!” and she rocked herself violently backward and forward in her chair.

Mrs. Livingston roused herself, and said, as much to comfort her own heart as Bessie’s, “He doeth all things well.”

“Yes, yes,” returned Bessie, “but it is so hard. It seems to me just as though everything was coming now to crush me. Oh! I have never known sorrow before.”

“Bessie, come with me, wont you?” said Mrs. Livingston, arising, “the servants will need the table. Come, come with me, dear, to my room.” Bessie passively followed. After Mrs. Livingston closed her door, she lovingly enfolded Bessie in her arms, and said, “My poor, stricken lamb! it seems heavy I know, for sorrow is, indeed, new to you; but come, I have some very sweet comfort for you,” and seating herself and Bessie, she took from the table near by, her Bible, and read the

23d Psalm. Then kneeling, she carried the sorrows, trials, and wants of both, to the Father above, in a prayer of faith, which was accepted and answered; for when both arose, their tranquil countenances told that they had not knelt in vain.

Margaret, on leaving the dining-room, entered her own, and read the letter a number of times; then she took it in her hand, and passed to Louise's room. She found Georgie awake, but Louise asleep.

"I have a letter from mother," said she. "I wish you would wake up Louise; I think she would do better to be reading it, than sleeping at this time of day."

Georgie woke Louise, but when she heard for what purpose, she exclaimed, "Why did you wake me up? just as though I could not read it at any time. Don't disturb me again! I want to sleep."

"But, Louise, mother is worse," said Margaret. "How can you sleep?"

"Well, I can't help it," replied Louise, drowsily, "I am so sleepy! I'll be up pretty soon; just leave the letter on the table."

"O, dear!" said Margaret, "how can she feel so!" and passing the letter to Georgie to read, she left the room.

Georgie had only read it part through, when Louise awoke, and saw what she was doing.

“Dear me,” said she, endeavoring to rouse herself, “how sleepy I am! What is it? mother worse. Read it to me, Georgie?”

Georgie commenced, but ere she finished, Louise was asleep once more — her delicate frame entirely exhausted by her night’s dissipation.

Georgie did not attempt to arouse her again, but laid the letter just where she would see it, when she did awake, which was not till near noon.

By the afternoon, Louise was quite rested, and descended to the parlor at four o’clock, to receive her friend, Bell Rivers.

“Why, Bell,” said she, “how could you come out to-day? I’m entirely worn out?”

“Poor, feeble girl!” replied Bell. “I wouldn’t have such a weak constitution as you possess, for anything! Why, I could go to another ball to-night, and dance just as long, too, without scarcely feeling it.”

“Well, I suppose you could,” returned Louise, “you are so strong; but I have always been one of the weak ones. We have heard bad news from mother, too, and that makes me feel still worse.”

“Ah!” responded Bell, thoughtfully, “she is worse; then that is probably what ailed Ned this morning. He called, on the way down town, and I could not imagine what was the matter, he was so surly.

“Probably so,” said Louise, “and I guess he’s provoked, too, with Bessie, for staying at home last night.”

“How foolish she was,” returned Bell. “By the way, did you notice how soon Mr. Belmont went home. He didn’t probably care to stay, as long as his great attraction was minus.”

“No; I didn’t notice him at all,” replied Louise, “I was so much engaged.”

“Yes, I saw you was,” responded Bell; “A very fine young man that Mr. Carleton. By the way, let me tell you a little conversation I overheard between him and Mrs. Sargent. They were speaking of some ladies with whose conduct it seemed to me they were very much disgusted. I could not make out who they were, or exactly what they said. I was curious, so I drew a little closer to them and heard Mr. Carlton say, ‘I agree with you, it is indeed a pity that such beautiful young ladies, should be so forward and thoughtless; such conduct destroys all their beauty for me.’ ‘And the trouble of it is,’ returned Mrs. Sargent, ‘that were you to tell these young ladies their conduct was unbecoming, you could scarcely persuade them of the truth of it. They would think you were actuated by envy or jealousy, and wished them to behave more modestly only to hinder them from receiving attention.’ ‘Yes, I

presume it would be so,' said Mr. Carlton. 'I often think such conduct arises from a desire to please, but their very efforts defeat their purposes. If they would only remember that modesty and simplicity are the two greatest gems of womanhood, they would succeed better.' 'And would be natural,' replied Mrs. Sargent, 'and give more correct impressions of themselves.' Just here Edward came up and wished me to dance. I wondered all the while I was dancing whether I was not one of those persons they had been describing. I think myself I was pretty wild last night; but there, I don't care! one might as well enjoy the world while she is in it, and after all, people don't think alike."

Louise made but little reply to Miss Rivers. She felt what Mr. Carleton and Mrs. Sargent had said was true, and now she wished she had been more simple and retiring.

But little did either of them think that they were the young ladies referred to by Mrs. Sargent and Mr. Carleton. It was indeed so, and as Mr. Carleton watched Louise during the evening, he determined out of kindness to his old friend Edward, and interest in Louise, to speak some time indirectly to her upon the subject. He had already well studied Louise's character, though he had met her but a few times, and thought an indirect

reproof from a stranger might perhaps effect more good than the same reproof from one who was constantly with her.

Louise and Bell continued their conversation some time longer, till finally, Bell casually glancing out of the window observed Edward returning home.

"Here comes Edward," said she to Louise, and then instantly turned to the piano and commenced playing rapidly.

Edward entered the parlor, and seeing Bell, exclaimed, "Why, Bell, I thought you said you could not go out to-day."

She only shook her head for a reply, and continued her piece. Edward waited, evidently annoyed, a few moments, and then Bell turned round and said,

"Your pleasure, sir."

"I thought you said you couldn't go out, to-day," again said he.

"So I did," returned Bell; "but I changed my mind—the privilege of all ladies, I believe. I thought I would come down and see Louise, and find out how you were this afternoon. It seems to me you are rather cross yet."

"Well, you are enough to make any one cross," replied he.

"Is it possible?" returned Bell, provokingly, and then she turned round to the piano and commenced playing rapidly as before. Louise, fearing what might follow, now left the room.

Edward Huntingdon listened to Bell for a while, as he paced up and down the room, waiting for her to cease and speak with him. Finally, he said, "Bell, I wish you would stop playing; I want to speak with you."

"Why, what *is* the matter with you," returned she, impatiently, still running lightly over the keys.

"Matter enough," replied he, bitterly, "for one day. A quarrel with Margaret, Bessie acting like a simpleton, bad news from mother, and you a perfect torment to me all the time. I declare, I'll never go to another ball where you are, if you conduct as you did last night! I have had a quarrel with Belmont, too, just on your account and Louise's. He thinks you are both 'heartless flirts,' and had the impertinence to tell me some speeches he heard made about you at the 'club.' I should think, Bell, for my sake, you would keep yourself more select."

"Indeed, I will!" replied she, rising, and speaking in a very excited tone of voice. "I understand Mr. Belmont, perfectly. He hates me himself, and now would prejudice you against me, by repeating the petty remarks of some foolish young man, whose attentions, perhaps, I have refused."

"No, Bell, it's not so," replied Edward. "He

is your friend, and for your good he said it ; and the gentlemen who made the remarks, are not of your acquaintance ; they only spoke from observation. I do wish — ” but here Bell arose to leave the room. “ Stop ! ” exclaimed Edward, endeavoring to detain her, “ and listen to reason.”

“ Let me pass,” said she, very angrily.

And he let her go, crushing down a heart full of tumultuous feelings.

Bell passed to Louise's room, and entering, said, quick and nervously, “ Louise, do get me my hat for pity's sake ! Ned's got one of his jealous fits, and is just as hateful as he can be. He says Belmont's been telling dreadful stories about us. He wont see me for one while, that's certain,” and gathering up her dress, she passed quickly down the stairs, and out the house.

Louise did not venture near her brother ; she knew it would be no use ; beside, she feared to hear what he might tell her. Her conscience was far from at rest.

The same afternoon that the above took place, Mrs. Livingston sought the room of Margaret.

“ Margaret, I have come,” said she, as she entered, “ to speak about the unfortunate occurrence of this morning.”

“ Very well,” replied Margaret, “ I should be pleased to hear you, for I have been wondering all

day, how you could feel that Edward had done right."

"Did I say that he had done right?" questioned Mrs. L.

"No, not exactly," returned Margaret, "but you did n't say he had done wrong."

"No, I know I did not then, but I will tell you how I feel now. He was, indeed, very thoughtless, and I cannot blame you for feeling offended at him, but I do blame you for the manner in which you spoke to him; it was harsh and dictatorial, and only provoked his passion. Had you spoken lovingly and mildly, we should have been spared such an exhibition of passion, and your reproof would have effected good. As it is, he feels only resentment, and you have placed us all in an unpleasant position."

"I do not know why one should speak so coaxingly and soothingly to another, when they have committed a wrong. I believe in speaking of things as they are, and condemning wrong, decidedly and firmly."

"Is there not such a thing as gentle decision," said Mrs. L., "and if you feel just anger for an offence, ought you not just as much to pity the offender? Tell me, which feeling occupied your heart most at the time, pity or anger?"

"Anger, I suppose," truthfully returned Margaret. "I don't think I had any pity."

"Yes, that is what I thought; but don't you think if you had had pity, you would have spoken more mildly."

"Certainly; but Oh! dear aunt, you look at things in a very different light from what I do. You think, then, I really spoke to Edward in a wrong manner, do you?"

"Yes," returned Mrs. L., "I do; you were too severe. I admire the strong sense of justice you seem to possess; but don't forget, will you, to ever let 'mercy season it.' Now, you think and pray over this matter, and see if you cannot regard it as I do," and Mrs. Livingston left Margaret to herself.

Margaret sat quietly for some time, reasoning upon what her aunt had said. She prayed over the matter, too, and finally saw plainly that she had erred.

"And now what shall I do," thought she; must I tell Edward so? how can I." And then for another period, she argued with duty and pride. Duty conquered, and she resolved her first opportunity to acknowledge her wrong to Edward. Margaret Huntingdon had just the disposition of which martyrs are made. Let her judgment be convinced of the right of a matter, and she would make any sacrifice rather than yield this right.

The same evening afforded her a chance to speak to Edward, for he came in early from his 'club.' He had but just entered his room, when he heard Margaret's knock.

"Come in," said he, expecting to see Bessie.

"O, it's you," said he, rather gruffly. "What do you wish?"

"To speak with you a few moments."

"Well, sit down," returned he in the same tone, though slightly modified.

"I had rather stand," said Margaret; "I have but little to say. This morning, I think I spoke too severely to you. I felt too much anger, or rather I did not feel pity enough, and I trust you will forgive and forget it." Margaret's voice trembled quite evidently on these last words.

"Come, sit down here, Margaret," replied Edward, pointing to the lounge. "I want to talk to you."

Margaret seated herself silently beside him.

"Margaret," said he, "I am very glad to hear you say so. I deserved your anger, and the anger of all the rest; and you cannot, any of you, feel more provoked at me, than I was and am, at myself, for my thoughtlessness. I am ashamed, too, that I got into such a passion, but, Margaret, you provoked me to it. You know you have always had a great influence over me, and there is

much I love and respect in you ; but since you have joined the church, you have become so severe in your remarks, and particular about some things, that you make me perfectly unhappy. Now mother is a Christian, and your aunt is one ; but mother is very different from you, and the short time your aunt has been here, I can see she differs also. I wish you would copy after her, and you would be a more cheerful Christian, I think."

"Christ is our only example," replied Margaret, "and I do try to be like him, but I err like all mortals. I see myself, I am not like Mrs. Livingston, and I know mother often reproved me ; but I used to feel mother's sickness made her too lenient to the faults of others, and so did not give much heed to what she said. However, I will try," continued she, while rising from the lounge, "to be less severe, and may I not hope, brother, that you will also endeavor to be more thoughtful."

"Yes, Margaret, I will. I can assure you, I feel exceedingly thoughtful to-night."

"God bless you," said Margaret, in return, and quietly passed out the room.

But Edward had hardly closed the door after her, before he opened it again to admit Bessie he was sure this time.

"Bless your little heart," said he, taking her into his arms, and kissing her again and again. "How glad I am to see you here."

"You are," said she, in evident surprise; "why I was almost afraid to come."

"O Bessie, dear," returned he, "never be afraid to come to me, no matter if you have been so naughty as to make brother unhappy; he loves you so dearly, faults and all, that he could never be long vexed at you."

"Then you don't care for last night, do you?" said she, looking clear up into his face.

"Not much," replied he, sadly. "I only wish I had been at home with you. I think I should have been happier."

"Why, what was the matter?" inquired she, anxiously.

"O, nothing," responded he, evasively. "Nothing I want to tell you anyway. O, pet, this is a weary world!"

"Brother," said she, pityingly, "I am very sorry you are so unhappy to-night. I wish I could cheer you some way; don't feel so bad," and she laid her soft cheek against his.

"Ah! pet, you do comfort me," replied he, brushing away a tear. "Sweet little sister, you are my oasis."

And thus they talked for a long time some-

times sadly, sometimes thoughtfully, sometimes merrily, till the clock, striking eleven, startled both of them; and then reluctantly Edward sent away, to her own room, his precious comforter.

“How happy I am,” thought Bessie, as she laid her head on her pillow that night. “O, if I could only just see sweet mother now, to say and kiss ‘good night,’ my cup of happiness would, indeed, be full.”

CHAPTER XI.

THE days following the events in the preceding chapter, were full of wholesome thought to each member of the Huntingdon family. Day by day, they anxiously received news from their mother: sometimes it was cheering, and each one's step would be lighter, and voice merrier, for that day, only to be changed again on the morrow. Thus kept fluctuating between hope and fear, as a fortnight passed away, and then came a number of days the comforting assurance, "your mother is really better," so the conviction settled upon each heart that the worst was passed, and mother would yet come home again.

During this time, Mr. Leslie, the pastor of the Huntingdon family, called a number of times, to sympathize with them, to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Livingston, and to converse with Bessie.

He was one of those shepherds who is ever on the alert to feed his lambs. Many a time had he led the grief-stricken ones down by the "still waters," the famishing to the rich pastures, and the sin-stained to the ever-flowing Fountain, where

they might wash and be clean. He could call his flock all by name, and often he looked them over, to see that no one was missing, or had strayed from the fold. When any strayed, he followed hard after them, and with loving representations of the peaceful fold they had left, and its exceeding great privileges, he induced them to return.

Deeply loved and respected by all his people, and highly spoken of by the world, he yet stood meekly and lowly, pointing all to Christ. The world looked on, and said, "so much praise and homage will ruin him ;" but he, seeking only the praise of his Father, and feeling how little he accomplished for Him, to what he desired ; how much more of Christ he wished, aye, intensely hungered for ; how vain was all earthly commendation ; what an account he must render of the great power and talents committed to him, felt not the might of that subtile, soul-destroying praise, so ruinous to those who are not protected by the panoply of Christ. The world erred, as they ever do, in measuring Heaven, taught, by an earthly standard, and just here is one of the mysteries they comprehend, not in our glorious religion.

It was well for Margaret Huntingdon that she now sat under his preaching. She was not one that he had led to the Lamb of God, for she had embraced religion away from home, and under

very different teachings. When she came to unite with the church, he saw very plainly her mistaken ideas; but felt that the One who had taught her so much truth, would perfect that which he had commenced, and that these errors would soon disappear, under the light which cometh from above. He lent her books for that purpose, and forgot not her case when preparing food for his flock.

The day when he first called at the Huntingdons, he saw no one but Bessie, the rest of the family being away. She had just returned from school, and with pleasure, but still timidly, she entered Mr. Leslie's presence.

"Miss Bessie, I am very glad to see you," said he, as she entered. "How are you?"

"Very well," replied Bessie.

"In body and in mind," said he, pleasantly.

She gave him a sharp, quick look, and comprehending all he meant, replied, quietly,

"Yes, all well."

"All well," returned he, emphasizing the all. "Ah! Bessie, how much that implies. The soul that was once sick, cured by the great Physician, a restoration over which the angels in Heaven rejoice with exceeding joy. O, Bessie, I congratulate you on your recovery; but, my child, be careful, be careful. Remember, that you have

just been cured, you are weak and have but little strength, so keep near the great Physician, and He will aid you, and day by day you will grow stronger, and able to bear the strong meat of the gospel."

Tears were in Bessie's eyes, and she replied, "Yes, I know I am weak. O, how weak! I cannot go one step alone."

"No, indeed," smilingly responded Mr. Leslie. "You are like the little babe attempting to walk; but courage, keep firmly hold the Master's hand, and though you may tremble, you will not fall; He will save. I cannot impress too strongly upon your mind, the necessity of feeling that Christ is all to you — your Saviour, Keeper, Leader, ever present, ever ready, ever willing. Too many Christians regard Him correctly only in one light, as their Saviour from past sin; and as a good missionary lady has written, 'they then set about trying to subdue sin in themselves, or rather praying God to enable them to do it of themselves, without exercising faith in Christ to purify their hearts, just as they did exercise that faith for their conversion.' They, in fact, lean mostly upon themselves, and their own endeavors, and this is why you see so few growing Christians. Ah! Bessie, none but Christ, none but Christ. We are powerless; we are nothing, but He is able, He

will lead you, ‘guide you into all truth ;’ then drop yourself upon his sustaining arms, and beseech Him to work in you that which is well pleasing in His sight. My child, you look anxious, why so ? ”

“Because, Mr. Leslie, it seems such a great thing to be a Christian. O, I do want to be an earnest, devoted one ! ”

“I am very glad to hear you say so. The Divine Master says, ‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.’ Doubt not, His promises never fail. Press forward, He will give you as much of Himself as you desire ; there are no limits to his abundance. Let me repeat a few of the precious promises : ‘According to your faith be it unto you.’ ‘And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.’ ‘If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.’ ‘Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name ; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.’ ‘If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children ; how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask Him.’ ‘If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’ ‘Now, unto him that is able to do, exceeding, abundantly above all that we can ask or think, &c.’ Are they not precious and assuring ? ”

"Yes, very," replied Bessie. "But they are so strong, my mind seems utterly unable to grasp them."

"Well," encouragingly returned Mr. Leslie, "grow in grace, and you will find yourself more and more able to grasp them. Remember, also, the Master teacheth unlike earthly teachers, and spiritual growth is not confined to intellect or age. By the way, Miss Bessie, judging from what your mother told me, you must have a very precious Christian counsellor in your aunt. I was at first a little disappointed when the servant told me she was not at home; but when I found that you were, and that I could see you alone, I could but thank God for giving me such an opportunity; and it has been a precious season to me, my child. However, I will call again next week (Wednesday), Providence permitting, and trust then to see Mrs. Livingston and the rest of the family."

"They will certainly be at home," returned Bessie; "and aunt Livingston will be disappointed, I know, that she was not at home to-day, for she desires very much to see you."

Mr. Leslie sat some time longer, conversing about Mrs. Huntingdon, and then Bessie mentioned Mr. Belmont's case to him.

"Ah! I am very glad to hear such an account of him," replied Mr. Leslie. "I have long been

interested in him, and now I shall wait with eagerness, an opportunity to speak with him. I trust the Lord will soon open up a way."

Mr. Leslie left soon after ; but not before he had commended his precious lamb to the great Shepherd's watchfulness and care.

CHAPTER XII.

A FEW days after Mr. Leslie called, Mr. Belmont and Bessie met at a horse-back party, which Edward had arranged for his and Margaret's birth-day.

It was a bright, pleasant afternoon, that the party started from Hill-side for Easy Hall, Mrs. Livingston's home.

Edward rode with Margaret. Bell Rivers was not present — “a pressing engagement,” she informed Edward, “would prevent her accepting his very kind invitation.” Her pressing engagement did not prevent her though from watching the party through a closed blind as they passed her father's house, and was not engaging enough to enable her, during the whole afternoon, to forget, for five minutes, the horse-back party. Truly, like many others, she punished herself more than any one else, in her endeavors for revenge.

Edward, I said, rode with Margaret, and though he frowned and bit his teeth as he passed Bell's home, yet he soon banished all thoughts of her, and found himself quite content, while endeavor-

ing to promote the happiness of Margaret. He had been greatly pleased at Margaret's confession, and had earnestly determined to be a more loving and charitable brother to her.

While riding leisurely along, discussing upon the scenery about them, Margaret's horse was suddenly startled, and pulling her rein quickly, she heard immediately Bessie's merry voice, saying, "Now for a race, Margaret."

Mr. Belmont joined in, too, while passing Edward, saying, "Come on, sir; see who'll reach the toll-gate first. Its only a mile."

On they dashed, the merry company, Bessie and Mr. Belmont ahead; Margaret and Edward, and a number of others following, till finally Louise Huntingdon and Mr. Carleton, brought up the rear. Louise galloped a few paces, and then suddenly stopped.

Mr. Carleton turned back as soon as he missed her, and anxiously asked, "What is the trouble, Miss Huntingdon?"

"O, nothing," said she, "only I have no taste for such a galloping chase over such a road as this," and she smoothed her hair, and arranged her slightly disordered dress.

Mr. Carleton paced leisurely along, determined to please Louise, who, though she saw the party were waiting for her at the toll-gate, did n't hurry in the least.

"Now, do be amiable to-day," said Georgie, as Louise reined her horse up by Georgie's.

"Do you be amiable," returned Louise, in a very low tone, while glancing furtively towards Mr. Carleton, "and not find fault with me to-day."

They passed on, Louise and Mr. Carleton ever in the rear. Their conversation was very rambling at first, till finally Mr. Carleton casually mentioned Europe, and Louise began to question him with all that eagerness and curiosity American girls have for this fairy land of their imagination. He told her — and he found her, indeed, a silent, interested listener — of its wonders and works, both in nature and art. At last he spoke of the people, and the women he had met ; and in a sort of indifferent manner, he mentioned the difference he had found between many of them and his own country women, especially the younger ladies.

Louise winced many times at his remarks, and somehow her eyes, which had rested so easily on Mr. Carleton when she started upon her ride, were rarely turned upon him now, and when they were lifted for a moment, were very soon dropped again. A narrow observer could very well discover she was ill at ease. The subject of the conversation annoyed her ; and though all that Mr. Carleton said was very interesting, she would

rather have had him say it to a crowd than to her alone. It seemed personal and corrective. He did not try to mark the effect of what he said to her. With a tender, deep respect for woman, he knew too well she could but feel it, and he wished not that she should suspect his intention ; and with the same feeling, he echoed immediately her avertive remark concerning the desolateness of the scenery around. Then he repeated, with much feeling and deep pathos, Bryant's beautiful poem,

“The melancholy days have come,
The saddest of the year.”

His earnest, truthful tones, had a strange effect upon Louise, for suddenly she gave rein to her horse, and with a sudden laugh, which had an aching tone in it, bade him follow, “she was ready for a race now.”

“What a coarse nature,” thought he, as he followed her, “hidden under such a beautiful exterior. How could she laugh after that poem ?” Mr. Carleton did not understand Louise just then.

“Come, Bessie, I'm ready for you now,” said Louise lightly, as she rode up to her.

“Well,” returned Bessie, starting immediately on, while Mr. Carleton and Belmont followed the merry girls.

Bessie won by a long distance, and when she

stopped, she turned her horse and lowly bowed to the discomfited ones.

Ah! she was a pretty picture just then, resting so mischievously quiet on her "little grey," her flushed face supported by a little, white hand, while her rich brown eyes peeped full of merriment from between her tangled curls.

All rode slowly up, gazing admiringly on the little figure in the middle of the road, so distinct between them and the nearly setting sun. She moved not, all unconscious of the admiration she was exciting, till the party nearly reached her; then gathering her reins she turned her horse, and shaking her head, exclaimed, "O, what sorry gallants! What shall I do if 'grey' runs with me?"

"Run with him," said Belmont, laughingly. "I guess he would n't throw you. Glorious fellow," continued he, patting the horse's proudly arched neck; and then bending a little nearer towards Bessie, concluded in lower tones, "Just like his mistress exactly."

Bessie heard all the remark distinctly; but somehow a reply would n't come, so she was silent.

The party reached Easy Hall just at sunset, and received a warm welcome from Mrs. Livingston, who had come down the day before to make

preparations for them. They only had sufficient time to make a hasty toilet, before they were summoned to supper, and Easy Hall never entertained more furnished people. An hour or two passed in entertainment, and then the party started for a moonlight ride home. It was rather a mild evening, but still cold enough to make it necessary for them to ride briskly. Along the uninhabited places, they sang merry songs ; but as they neared home, they grew more silent and sometimes one couple sometimes another were the lagging ones. After they passed the toll-gate, a few miles from home, Mr. Belmont and Bessie fell back far in the rear.

“ Now, Bessie,” said Mr. Belmont, “ Wont you finish what we were talking about this afternoon ? Tell me why you did not attend the ball ? ”

Very quietly, easily, and confidently, Bessie told it all — all the feelings, longings and experiences of her heart, during the past few weeks.

Mr. Belmont heard her attentively and reverently, and was astonished to see how she had out-reached him.

They talked very earnestly for a long while upon this subject, so inexpressibly precious to one heart ; finally, Bessie turning round and checking her horse a little, said with uplifted hand, “ O, Mr. Belmont, if you love me any, will you, will you not give earnest heed to these things ? ”

Mr. Belmont suddenly reached out and tightly grasped the extended hand, then said intensely and with deep meaning, "Bessie, if I love you! Bessie, I will do anything for you."

"Oh! not for me," anxiously returned she, "no, no, not for me, but for the precious Saviour's sake."

Mr. Belmont let drop her hand, and sadly, thoughtfully, replied, "Yes, Bessie, I must for Jesus' sake only. God help me!"

CHAPTER XII.

AH! how one day can entirely change the course of life. To-day we may be as light as the summer-cloud, to-morrow winter's leaden sky may settle heavily upon us. Thus it was with Louise H., the morning after the horse-back ride. When she awoke, it was with a weight upon her heart, no strength of her own could ever remove. It was a dull November day too, and as she lifted her curtain and gazed out on the leafless branches and falling leaves, her heart sank within her, and she sadly murmured, "Ah! me, it is no use, I know he only despises me. I am not a modest violet, no indeed. Oh! I wish I had never met him." Then came pride, and she hastily turned away and impatiently said, "There, I won't give him another thought; how foolish in me!" but in vain; all that long day, could the paper she glanced over, the book she read, the embroidery she stitched, speak, they would tell a very different tale.

Her feelings were more aggravated, too, by a short courtesy call on the family by Mr. Carleton,

who was suddenly summoned from the city. His manners were very gentlemanly and pleasing, and Louise was, if possible, more interested than before. He had no sooner left, however, and hope had begun to whisper to Louise, "who knows," than a lady friend called, and in the course of conversation she mentioned Mr. Carleton, and added, "He is a very superior man, and is engaged, I believe, to Miss C., of B.

After she left, Louise stopped in the hall, and pressing her hand tightly against her heart gazed anxiously up stairs, then towards the library, her swelling heart getting fuller every moment. "Oh! where can I go," thought she, "where I shall be alone, all alone. Why *did* I ever see him,—then suddenly she ran hastily up stairs, past her own room where Georgie was sitting, past again the rooms of the servants, till reaching a dark closet she entered, and closing the door, flung herself upon a mattress, and burst into a flood of tears — tears wrung from a mortified and disappointed heart.

'Twas a light summer cloud which floated over Bessie that day, and many a little low love song she sang to herself, while she traversed in thought every action and word of the preceding day. Sometimes her eyes would sparkle a little brighter, and the rising blood warm still more the rosy

cheek, as laying down her sewing for a moment, she would gaze over to a certain house some distance from hers, and murmur, "Yes, he certainly said so, and if he didn't he acted so, any way. I wonder if he will go and see Mr. Leslie." Mrs. Livingston wondered, and even asked Bessie, "How she could sit up stairs all day alone," but if she could have peeped into the happy maiden's heart, she wouldn't have wondered any more.

That evening at eight o'clock Mr. Belmont entered his pastor's study. Nervously he awaited his entrance, but Mr. Leslie's greeting and manner soon re-assured him, and after some general conversation, more composedly than he thought possible, he announced his errand. He told all, his early training, his religious impressions, his views, and finally ended with, "I know I ought to be a Christian, and to a certain extent, I feel it, but I can't understand the doctrines."

"Can't understand the doctrines," returned Mr. Leslie, smilingly, "Well, then, lay them aside, we won't have anything to do with them at present."

"Lay them aside!" responded Belmont, with evident surprise, "why I thought they were the very foundation of religion."

"Christ is the foundation," replied Mr. Leslie.

"Yes, I know," said Mr. Belmont, "but it is

necessary to understand and believe the doctrinal points, is it not?"

"Mr. Belmont," returned Mr. Leslie, "you are a sick man, very sick; you need a Physician, and every moment you delay applying to Him you are in great danger. But the trouble is, you do not know how sick you are, and are wasting precious time in studying out what disease is in general, and how it may be cured. Now, sir, I beg of you to let these matters alone, and take your individual case and attend to it. Appreciate first how sick you are, and then apply immediately to the great Physician for help."

"And have I nothing to do with the doctrines?" still persisted Mr. Belmont.

"Did I say anything about them?" replied Mr. Leslie, pleasantly. "Just drop them, if you please, and let us take a look at yourself. Now"——but here Mr. Leslie was interrupted and summoned from the room. He excused himself from Mr. Belmont, but begged him to remain till his return, as he should be absent only a few moments. It was providential that Mr. Leslie was called out just then, as silent and alone Mr. Belmont yielded to the rush of conviction which now poured in upon his mind. Rapidly went thought back into the blackened past, and vividly it all arose before him, his gentle mother's teachings,

the many warnings of friends he had despised, his selfishness, pride, deceit, and the evil influence he had exerted upon others. Suddenly with these bitter recollections came another, which gave a more severe pang than any of the previous ones — the recalling of the motive which had prompted him to visit Mr. Leslie that evening. "It was not for religion," cried he to himself, from the depths of his anguished heart. "Hypocrite! it was because I thought it would please Bessie. Oh! what a sinner I am! I abhor myself! Who can wash away all this sin? It's no use. I can't be saved!" and in this despair Mr. Leslie found him on his return.

"Well," said he cheerily as he entered, "do you feel your need of the great Physician, yet?" that having been the silent prayer which had ascended many times from Mr. Leslie's anxious heart during his absence.

"Yes," replied Belmont very sadly, "I think I do, but He won't cure me. I have sinned against too much light."

"Come now" — replied Mr. Leslie — "and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

"Well, if I had been honest in all this," con-

tinued Belmont, "I might hope, but I see it has been principally for a selfish end of mine own, that I came here this evening."

"Christ's blood can atone for even that," returned Mr. Leslie.

"But I feel so mean," rejoined Belmont ; "now if I could only do—but there, I can't do anything."

"No," returned Mr. Leslie, tenderly, "nothing at all. Human nature inclines every sinner to come to Christ, feeling a righteousness of his own, feeling honorable as one might term it, but in such a state we can never find Christ. We must see ourselves, and all our good deeds as filthy rags, and casting them all aside, must take unto us Christ's beautiful robe of righteousness."

"But how can I get it?" responded Belmont.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

"But am I to have it by simply believing?"

"Simply believing."

"But how shall I know I get it? and how can I make myself believe it?"

"Do you believe in God?"

"Yes, certainly."

"If you believe in Him, can you not believe in His promises?"

"Yes."

“Well, then, He has promised, ‘Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.’ ‘Those that seek me early shall find me.’ ‘Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you.’ ‘Behold I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him and he with me.’”

“Oh! what precious promises,” returned Belmont. “Are they really in the Bible? Yes, I know they are, I have heard them many times. I wish I could get hold of them, I want to believe, but it seems as though I was not ready. Have I nothing else to do, but believe?”

“If you see and feel yourself a great sinner, needing a great Saviour, nothing else but to renounce self, and consecrate yourself to Him, then throw yourself into his loving arms.”

“Consecrate myself to Him? What do you mean?”

“Be willing to give to him all your powers, talents, influence, in fact all you possess — to use your money and time for His service. Heretofore you have lived for yourself and your own happiness. If you give yourself to Him you must feel that hereafter ‘whether you eat or drink or whatsoever you do, to do all to the glory of God, ever seeking His will, not your own.’ Do you think you can do this?”

Mr. Belmont reflected for a few moments, and then replied earnestly, "Yes, I think I can. It is but a very little I have to give to Him any way, but I give it all. I desire to be an earnest, true, whole-souled Christian, or none at all."

"Well then, my friend, all that you have to do is to believe that Christ will accept you. He is much more willing to receive you, than you are anxious to go to Him."

"Is that so?"

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

"But what a venture! it seems like throwing myself into darkness."

"Venture, venture, and you will soon find whether it is darkness or not."

Mr. Belmont paused awhile, then turning round he took up his hat, and rising, said,

"Well, Mr. Leslie, I am very much obliged to you for this conversation, and will try to cast myself on Christ."

"When?" returned Mr. Leslie, still retaining his seat.

"O, soon," replied Mr. Belmont, "as soon as I have an opportunity."

"But you have it now," continued Mr. Leslie.

“But I want more time,” responded Mr. Belmont.

“Time for what?”

“To prepare myself.”

“Now is the accepted time, now the day of salvation;” he seated, if you please, and let me repeat some verses to you before you leave; and, in a low, touching tone, his eyes lifted prayerfully upward, Mr. Leslie recited these simple but beautiful lines:

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidd’st me come to thee,
O, Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O, Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
With fears within and foes without,
O, Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in *thee* to find,
O, Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, though so depraved,
So long by Satan’s power enslaved,
To be by thee renewed and saved,
O, Lamb of God, I come,

Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because thy promise I believe,
O, Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am — thy love, unknown,
Has broken every barrier down :
Now to be thine, yea, *thine alone*,
O, Lamb of God, I come."

Mr. Belmont's head was bowed ere Mr. Leslie had half finished them, and when he concluded, amid tears and sobs, Mr. Belmont murmured, "O pray for me !"

"Can you not pray for yourself, my friend?" returned Mr. Leslie.

A moment's pause, and then the struggle gave way, and Mr. Belmont knelt at his chair, and with broken utterances, repeated over and over,

"O, Lamb of God, I come."

Mr. Leslie followed in earnest, supplicating prayer. He closed, and when they arose, they were *one in the Lord*.

As Mr. Belmont was passing out of the house he encountered Edward Huntingdon on the steps.

"You here," exclaimed Edward, in a hurried, excited voice, "Oh ! for mercy's sake ring that bell and call for Mr. Leslie ! We've heard from father this evening, and mother—Oh ! mother," he

said no more, but convulsively gasping, pressed one hand against his throbbing head, and laid the other upon his friend's shoulder, then gaining a little strength, he said, "she's gone!"

"Gone!" said Belmont, "Oh! Bessie, what will she do? Oh! Edward, I feel for you, my friend; none but God can support you now."

"Yes," vacantly returned Edward, "Did you ring that bell?"

"Yes," replied Belmont, and just then the servant appeared.

The sad news was soon told to Mr. Leslie, for heavy grief needs but few words, and in a few moments he joined them.

Silent and rapid was their walk to the mourning home. As they neared it, Belmont wrung his friend's hand, and only said, "When may I come?"

"Any time to-morrow; Bessie will be glad to see you," replied Edward, and with a farewell grasp, Mr. Belmont left them.

Oh! what a stricken family did Mr. Leslie gaze upon as he entered Hillside. Bessie was kneeling by the sofa fanning Louise, her deathly pale countenance only exceeded by Louise's, who lay in a swoon. Georgie sat by her, bathing her head, and every now and then brushing away the tears which dimmed her own eyes, while Margaret,

seated on a low ottoman, swayed herself backwards and forwards, her tearless eyes fixed with a vacant stare upon the carpet. Mrs. Livingston and her brother, Mr. John Huntingdon, who was present, were the only calm ones in the room.

As Mr. Leslie and Edward entered, Mrs. Livingston welcomed Mr. Leslie, and led the way immediately to the library.

Edward passed directly to Bessie, and taking her tenderly up in his arms conveyed her to the sofa.

“ Louise,” said Bessie anxiously.

“ Georgie will attend to her,” replied Edward, passing Georgie the fan. “ Now lay your head on my shoulder, pet, and he folded her closely to him, and took her cold trembling hands into his. Glancing up he saw Margaret.”

“ Maggie, dear,” said he, “ wont you come sit beside us, we want to get very close now.”

Margaret did not reply ; she only heaved a long drawn sigh, and shook her head mournfully.

As soon as Mrs. Livingston entered the library, she handed Mr. Leslie the telegraphic dispatch which had been received, and said, “ This is all.” It was directed to Mr. John Huntingdon, and read, “ Brother, tell them all that mother has gone — shall be home with her body the 24th.”

“ It was very sudden at the last, was it not ? ”

said Mr. Leslie, struggling with the coming emotion.

“ Yes,” sadly replied Mrs. Livingston, “ though I was prepared for it, I have felt assured from the first she would never return. But the children, it has fallen so heavily on them. Oh ! comfort them if you can,” and rising she led the way back to the parlor.

Mr. Leslie quietly recognized all, and then opening a Bible, read the 23d psalm, then followed with prayer. His low comforting tones broke the spell of Margaret’s bewildering grief, and bursting into sobs and tears, she dropped her head into Mrs. Livingston’s lap who sat beside her. Mr. Leslie stopped for a while, and when she ceased somewhat he resumed his prayer. With delicate judgment he carried their minds away from their grief to the heavier sorrows of the crucified Lamb of God, and there was not one when he closed, save Louise, who still lay unconscious, who did not feel he had wrestled and gained for them divine strength and support. He left soon after, feeling that their heavily laden hearts could bear no more, and promising to visit them again the following day.

“ Don’t you think we ought to do something more for Louise ? ” said Mrs. Livingston, as Mr. Leslie departed.

"I don't know," replied Edward. "She's had two or three of these swoons before when she has been much excited, and the Doctor didn't do a great deal for her. She will be better soon, I think; if not, I will go for him."

It was as Edward said; ten minutes had not elapsed when she languidly opened her eyes, and just raising her head a little, glanced wildly about.

"Oh!" said she, shudderingly, as recollection came, "I know," and dropped her head back again.

Bessie was at her side in a moment, and smoothing back her hair said, "Dear Louise, it's Bessie," then laid her face against hers, saying in low tones, "Precious sister, precious sister, don't feel so bad!"

Louise threw her arms about Bessie's neck and clung to her, with all the helplessness of a child.

It was long past midnight before the Huntingdon mansion was quiet, and the lonely ones could so dispose of themselves as to be willing to seek rest. How heavy sorrow, especially death, brings the most solitary together!

Oh! the awakening of the next morning! Only those know who have awoke on such mornings!

It was but Georgie, Bessie, and Edward, who

sat down to breakfast together, for Mrs. Livingston was with Louise, who lay prostrate and unable to rise. The stroke had fallen too heavily on her delicate frame, and her physician feared it might seriously affect her for a time. Margaret was also sick with one of her severe headaches, and at her urgent request was unwillingly left alone.

How well it is for us when overpowered with grief, that we either sink under it, the body's pain thus for a while hushing the heart's, or we are called to minister to those who do thus suffer, forgetting somewhat the true grief in anxiety for the sick ones! Thus it was with the rest of the Huntingdon family, anxiety for Margaret, and especially for Louise, shared their mourning for the lost one.

Mr. Leslie came as he had promised, and a few other kind friends, to offer their services of love. Finally Mr. Belmont came, and when Bessie heard his name, a sad smile, faint shadow of the true one, passed over her face. She stepped a little quicker to meet him than had been her wont that morning, but her quickness left her as she entered the room, and taking hold of an arm-chair, she covered her face with her hand and gasped, "Oh! Mr. Belmont."

He sprang to her side, and tenderly supporting

her, said with deep emotion, "Oh! Bessie, you must let me comfort you now; you can hardly imagine how this has affected me. I could not stay away longer."

Bessie did not refuse, but allowed him to lead her to the sofa, where he listened long and tenderly to the meanings of her sorrow-charged heart. In conversation, he casually mentioned meeting Edward at Mr. Leslie's.

"Were you there?" said Bessie in an interested tone.

"Yes," replied he, "I went, but you don't want to hear about it now, you have enough on your heart."

She glanced up at him, and saw too well it was no sorrowing news he had to tell.

"Yes, I do," said she, "may be the Lord has sent me something comforting by you. I think I ought to rejoice with you, as you have wept with me."

"How do you know you are to rejoice?" said he.

"I feel it," replied she.

And she did rejoice with him, and for a time her heart was lightened. But all the weight came crushingly back again when he left her, and she as of old thought what good news she had to write to "mother." Bending under the weight she sadly went up stairs to lovingly minister to the sick ones.

The 24th came, a day of cloudless splendor. The afternoon of that day the Huntingdon family, save Edward and Louise, were gathered together waiting the coming of their father. Edward had gone to the depot in company with Mr. John Huntingdon, and Louise, though somewhat recovered, was still confined to her room. Her friend Bell, was with her. Mr. Leslie and Mr. Belmont were also with the Huntingdons.

Oh! how many prayers ascended from that spot during those waiting hours, for each one felt she had nothing else with which to strengthen herself for the coming meeting. Quietly and sadly they waited, moment by moment, till finally they, father, mother, brother, uncle came! but Oh! what a coming! Draw the loving veil of silence softly o'er the scene.

Later in the evening, Mr. Huntingdon sat in Louise's room, holding tenderly her thin wasted hand, while Bessie, sitting upon his knee, was encircled tightly by his protecting arm. But few words were said, and she whose remains lay silently below, was not mentioned, save once, when Louise softly murmured, "mother," but her father's gentle "hush," and sad smile, was the only reply she received.

The sad day of burial and mourning passed, and the evening closed in on a motherless family—

a voice hushed forever — a seat no more to be filled — a presence never to be seen in the earthly home, but standing at the doorway of another mansion, lovingly waits to welcome one by one the children home, where “mother” will never leave them more.

CHAPTER XIV.

A WONDERFUL calmness buoyed up Mr. Huntingdon during these dark days, but it was all explained when the morning after the funeral he entered the dining-room with a large Bible in his hand.

“Sister,” said he, “I wish you would call the servants.”

Not at all surprised, but with a gratified smile as though she had expected it, Mrs. Livingston arose and did his bidding.

The servants came in wonderingly, but seated themselves quietly and waited for an explanation.

“Our house,” said Mr. Huntingdon in an earnest but slightly quivering tone, “must now be dedicated to — her God, and to ours. I bless the Lord that she taught me to read this book, and I desire hereafter to make it the ‘man of my counsel and the guide of my heart,’ and trust and pray my children and servants will do the same. I hope also you will never forget the last act almost of her life, while she was at home, was to have family prayer. I am glad to be able to fol-

low her example. I will read a portion of the first chapter of the gospel of St. John, the fourteenth chapter of which was the last one I ever read to her." It was with difficulty Mr. Huntingdon could command himself sufficiently to read. He read but a few verses, and then kneeling, repeated simply the Lord's Prayer. Blessed prayer! how many have found it a strong refuge when first essaying to lift the cross of public prayer.

No one present however imagined, what a cross this had been to Mr. Huntingdon. They felt it must have been one, but they little knew how heavy. Only He who witnessed the deep struggles, and heard the earnest petitions for strength the previous night, could tell.

It was rather a quiet, but still very pleasant family at breakfast; all waited for a blessing, which followed from Mr. Huntingdon.

Bessie could scarcely restrain her feelings during the meal; as soon as it was finished, and her father left for the library, she followed immediately after him, and just opening the door and glancing in, said, "Dear father, please let me come, just one moment."

"Come," said he, opening his arms.

She sprang into them, and throwing both her arms around his neck, kissed him again and again,

saying, "O, father, dear father, how we shall love each other now. How very good God is to us!"

"Yes, yes," replied her father, brushing away a tear, and drawing back the curls from the little head which now lay so quietly against him, "We cannot praise him too much."

They were silent for a few moments communing with their own hearts, then Bessie suddenly started and said, "Pa, do you recollect the last time we were here?"

Mr. Huntingdon paused a moment, then replied, "Yes, I recollect, the night before we went away. Oh! how cruel I was to you, Bessie, but even then the Lord was speaking to me, though I would not heed Him. I promised her, I would strive to enter in at the strait gate, but my proud heart would n't yield till her lifeless form laid before me. May be, Bessie, she was with those angels who rejoiced when the lost one was found."

"Oh! mama, dear mama," said Bessie, if I could only have seen her at the last; it can't seem to me now she's really gone."

"It was pleasant to her, Bessie, that she died away from you all. She often mentioned how rejoiced she was that 'the dear children were spared witnessing her death.' She knew how you

would all suffer, and you know her full loving heart would ever do much, to save you unnecessary sorrow."

"Noble, precious mama! can I ever be like her, papa?"

"With God's help, Bessie."

Thus they sat and talked about her a long time, till finally the day's duties obliged them to separate. A new cord had been woven during that interview to bind their hearts together — the golden cord of Christian love which no power on earth can sever.

That morning as soon as Mrs. Livingston could find an opportunity, she hastened to her room, and fastening her door, seated herself and drew towards her, her writing-desk, then, with trembling hands, took out the little package Mrs. Huntington had given her just before her departure. She opened it with a beating heart, and found a small manuscript, a letter directed to herself and another one to "My husband and children." Opening her own, the loved familiar writing stirred up the fountains of her heart, and she bowed her head in tears. As she became tranquil, she opened it again and read,

"MY DEAR SISTER LIZZIE,

"When your eyes rest upon this, I shall be sweetly asleep — asleep in Jesus; then don't mourn for me, but rejoice with 'exceeding joy.'"

“I want to tell you Lizzie what I have so often intimated to you, that I shall be a jewel in your crown, for it was your loving example which led me to Christ. I shall always feel to thank you, next to my Saviour for my salvation, and I pray the Lord that you may be the means of winning many unto Him.

“Lizzie, unto your earthly care I commit my children. Will you not care for *my* lambs? I know I am asking much of you, but I know too, your whole life is consecrated to doing good, and can you do a nobler work then to train them for life and immortality? I feel you are better fitted for the task, than even their poor mother, and she gives them to you, nothing doubting, that when orphans, your arms will be thrown with a mother’s love about them.

“You will see I have left a letter to my husband and children, and also my religious experience. I have copied from my journals those passages which I felt would be of most benefit to them, and have destroyed the rest as there is much I should not wish to have them read. Give them to Mortimer. Oh! I feel too well, the preparing of this is my last work for them.

“I can write no more; the writing of these from day to day has wearied me much.

“Good bye, sister, till we meet again. I shall be waiting for you. Yours, in Christ,

MARGARET E. HUNTINGDON.’

Many, many times was this little note perused; finally, with trembling loving hands it was laid quietly away. It was taken out again at night, and, with the other letter and manuscript, was placed upon Mr. Huntingdon’s table in the library. He saw them as he entered early in the eve-

ning, and the clock struck twelve ere he laid them aside. Then opening a drawer in his secretary, he tenderly placed them on another little package, containing her picture and a lock of her hair.

The next morning he called Mrs. Livingston into the library, and said, "I found them just where you placed them. Here is your precious note, and may I not trust your heart responds to Maggie's dying wish?"

"I accept it," said Mrs. Livingston; "by-and-by, I will talk further with you about it."

"Just so," returned Mr. Huntingdon, "we can't talk about such matters now. Maggie's letter and the manuscript I have laid aside till Louise is better, and the children all feel stronger. It's too soon, just now."

Mrs. Livingston acquiesced, and a month passed before the package was again opened. Then Mr. Huntingdon gave it to Edward in the presence of the rest, saying, "There is your mother's last, best gift, a letter to us all, and her religious experience, which she left in your aunt's care, to be given to us in case she did not return. God grant it may be the means of the salvation of our whole household."

"I will read them as quickly as possible," replied Edward, seeing the expression of desire of possession upon each face, "but afterwards I shall want to copy them for myself."

"So shall I," said Margaret.

"And I," said Bessie.

"And I must have one too," continued Louise.

"I suppose I must say the same," said Mrs. Livingston.

"Will you let me have them for three or four days," returned Mr. Huntingdon, "and then you shall all have a copy."

"How?" inquired Bessie.

"O, trust them with me, and you shall see."

Edward cheerfully yielded them to his father.

The next Sabbath morning, Mr. Huntingdon called them all, servants included, into the parlor, and presented each one with a little book, entitled "Mother's Last Gift."

It was very pretty and neatly bound, and was received with great surprise, as well as pleasure.

"I suppose I may retain the original," said Mr. Huntingdon, "by-and-by it may belong to one of you."

"Oh! papa," chided Bessie.

"Why, father!" said Edward, "who has such a right to them as you have?"

Mr. Huntingdon retained the originals, and soon after, again laid them away in the little drawer.

Perhaps no one took the little gift with more interest than Margaret, and seeking the quiet of her own room as soon as possible, she opened its pages with anxious throbbing heart, and read.

Sabbath Morning.

“MY DEVOTED HUSBAND, AND LOVING CHILDREN,

“Ah! you little know with what a trembling hand I commence this last letter, it may be, to you. I have seen you all this morning, and marked your pleasant smiles and loving words, to your poor, feeble mother, who fain would have gone with you to the House of God. I know you love me tenderly and devotedly, and you have all of you, ever been most mindful of my every desire, save one, and it is about that desire—which some of you have treated with indifference, and, must I say it, with scorn—I now write to you. You know, probably, what I mean, and can recall many times that I have spoken to you about it. I have also prayed for you, and with some of you. I wish now that I had prayed with you more. I hope yet I may find strength to pray with you all together, husband and children, every one. And now I ask—it may be for the last time—that my God may be your God, my Saviour your Saviour, and the Holy Ghost, my Comforter, your Comforter. To find Him, you have the best of all Guides, the blessed Bible. Oh! seek to make it the ‘man of your counsel and the guide of your heart.’

“Some weeks since, I wrote off my religious experience, the work of Christ in my heart, and surely I can leave you nothing of so great worth as this. Has he commenced His work yet in your hearts? Oh! that I could hear that joyful news soon.

“And now, Farewell; God grant it may not be eternal to any one of you, but that in those beautiful mansions above, where no inhabitants will ever say, ‘I’m sick,’ we may meet again, an unbroken family circle, not *one* left out.

“Yours, in great weariness, but with strong undying love.

MOTHER.”

* * * * *

WHAT CHRIST HATH DONE FOR ME.

In my girlhood, my grandmother Belden died, and her death was the means of my awakening to the realities of life and to my own state. In the church, which my mother attended, was a religious interest at that time. I soon numbered myself among the religious inquirers, visited my pastor for religious instruction, and thought I gave my heart to God, but what was my sorrow, when, after a conversation with my pastor one day, he told me kindly and tenderly, that he feared I was mistaken, that I was building on a false foundation.

Oh! how bitterly I wept, and how deeply I felt, cast out alone, as it were, on a desert, when this hope was struck from beneath me. I felt though it must be just as he said, for I had unbounded confidence in him. I was soon somewhat comforted, however, by the thought, that if my old hope was gone, Christ was not, and to Him again I could flee.

Soon after this, reverses in our family obliged us to remove from this place, and thus I came under the watch and care of another pastor. After some months, I again made a profession of religion, and united with the church in this latter place. But a poor weak lamb, just brought into the fold, I received but very little instruction and help, and the influences which surrounded me were not for my growth, and, therefore, I soon settled down to the level of the Christians about me. Naturally of a confiding disposition, I was disposed to be governed and to lean upon them. Did some one correct, or point out errors in my conduct, I felt it must be so, and endeavored to correct them, but alas! how few, how very few were they, who pointed out those defects. Not one single person can I remember, who spoke to me about growth in grace. But I was not at all satisfied with

myself, as a portion of a journal, I wrote at that time, testifies. It says,

“I long for something continually. I think it is excitement. I go away, and mix with the world, but it does not satisfy my longings. I am the most contented at home, trying to be good. I think if I should live more devoted to God, I should be far happier.”

But again, another change took place in my life, and I was placed under very different religious influences. In a little journal, which I used for self-examination at Communion seasons, I find how it affected me.

“A year ago, I was in C——, completely swallowed up in myself, thinking nor caring little for others, engrossed in the world and its pleasures, taking no real delight in religion, and acting as though I had not taken the solemn vows of God upon me, to live for him and His glory, but God has, I trust, in his providence, brought me to see the wickedness of my ways, and to desire to return to Him again; but Oh! when I look back, all is darkness. I am full of all uncleanness, and the future also is dark. I know, by experience, what a wicked heart mine is, and deceitful above all things. If it were not for the promises of Christ, how could I go forward through the straight and narrow road which leads to eternal life, but I know, and feel, if I place all my trust in Christ, He will sustain and uphold me, through all the trials and temptations of the coming year.” Then I examined my hope, my faith, my conduct, and made new resolutions. This was at January Communion; for March, I find I saw more sin in myself, in smaller acts, perhaps, and for May, I commence,

“Again, I have commenced to write, but I tremble as I do so. I dread to write and confess my sins, and make resolutions, for I commit so many more sins, and break my reso-

lutions so many times, that it is discouraging. I need severe discipline to bring me low at my Saviour's feet, and keep me there. I am too wild, too gay. I long to be holy and live a self-denying life ! ” Then follow more resolutions, but more minute than the preceding ones, while the 11th says, “ No matter if I break these repeatedly I will not give them up, but persevere, till they become rooted and grounded, so that I cannot forget or break them.”

Soon after, I write,

“ Oh, dear ! the faith of a Christian grows harder and harder. I feel almost discouraged. To-day, I am full of hope, and think I shall live more as a Christian should, and yet, ere to-morrow comes, I am led into some sin. How weak, how utterly weak I am ! — I think lately from the instructions of my pastor Tuesday evenings, I see my path of duty clearer, and what is required of a true Christian. Would that I could do as he has pointed out the path to us. I long to feel a steady fixedness of purpose, to adhere more to my principles and resolutions, to let nothing swerve me from them. When shall I be good and holy ? Oh ! for a humble, holy heart, delighting to do the will of God ! Oh ! for holiness, holiness. . . Saviour, help me. ‘ I am poor and needy, weak and wounded, sick and sore,’ helpless, entirely helpless. Encircle thy erring child with arms of mercy, and keep her from sinning so much, and living such a life of remorse for committing sin, breaking new resolutions, and worse than all setting a bad example of a Christian to others.”

The Lord still led me, and a year and a half after this, I write,

“ One whole year has passed since last I wrote here Pause, and think of thy past life, oh ! my soul. Deep, bitter affliction, has been mine the past year. Thou hast chastened me, and can I not say, ‘ Thy will be done,’ and that, ‘ It is good for me that I have been afflicted ? ’ Did I not need

it? Did'st not Thou in love administer the blow, and shall I not kiss the rod and profit by it? God forbid that I shall rush heedlessly on, and not see His all-wise purpose in it. Was it not to show me how little I really tried to conquer my besetting sins, how much wrapped up I was in the world, and its vain allurements, how proud and vain I am? Yes, Oh! yes! Oh! my heavenly Father, do Thou dwell in my heart, and by Thy holy Spirit quicken me in grace; do not forsake me, my God, but in my wanderings lead me back to Thee, though through the deepest waters of affliction. May I be more devoted, more thoughtful than I have ever been. May I see life in all its reality and earnestness of purpose, and henceforth live for the glory and honor of Christ, and feel that by one unkind look or word, I wound His cause which it should be my highest aim to adorn. Keep me from falling, and finally receive me to Thyself, through the merits of Him, who died to save all, even me." Amen.

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it,
Seal it for thy courts above."

Another year and more passed, a season, too, of new and heavy crushing sorrows! My Father was indeed dealing with me, and I wrote:

"I feel more submissive to the will of God in His dealings with me. I know I regard this world in a very different light, and I feel my afflictions have benefitted me, though I know, not as much as they ought. I feel a growing desire to devote myself to the service of God, and to wean my affections from earthly objects. I love communion with God, and prayer seems the dearest of all privileges to me; but I still feel I live a poor unworthy life, accomplishing little or nothing, in the service of God."

Time passed on, and again I wrote : “ I think I can truly say, ‘ My God Thy will be done.’ I begin to feel that I have much for which to live, that it is very sinful in me to pine and grieve over the past ; and that I should be up and doing something for my Lord and Saviour. I wish I could feel more closely connected to Christ, but it always seems to me that He is afar off, and that He has so many children to care for He can scarcely notice me ; but, faithless soul ! do I not know that He careth even for the flowers in the field, and will He then not care for me ? ”

Again.

“ It seems to me, my heart must be more depraved than others, I have so many trials. I scarcely recover from one before I am brought into another, but I deserve them ; yes, I feel from the depths of my heart that every one of them is deserved. Oh ! I need so much humbling, my heart is so proud. ’Tis nearly ten years, since I professed Christ, and the Future looms up with its ever-recurring weight of cares, duties and sorrows. How am I prepared to meet them ? Relying upon mine own strength, I fear far too much, it has taken a long, long while, for me to learn how weak I am, and I do not know even now how extreme that weakness is. Oh ! what would tempt me to give up the faith which I now possess — how could I live to face the ills of life — what comfort could I find in the vain deceitful pleasures of the world, and how could I look to the Future ! ”

On my birth-day I write, “ Oh ! wretched one that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin ! ” how I wish I could avoid writing the events of the past week. I have been tempted to destroy this journal, for it is such a record of sins, but I know it is best for me to keep it, even if it is so humbling. I do so thoroughly loathe and hate myself ! Why, why am I so sinful ? It seems to me every one of my actions is prompted by vanity, selfishness and ambition ; even the

very best of them. How is it I never used to compare myself with others, but lately I do it a great deal, when I wish to excuse myself from the omission of some duty, or the commission of some sin. I know it is very wrong, and I always try to banish such thoughts as quickly as possible, but Oh! Satan tempts me now, in such entirely new ways, I hardly know how to meet him."

"Shall I ever get this sinful body mortified and brought under subjection, or will it ever be as it is? Sometimes, I feel such a love for Christ spread abroad in my heart, that I feel as though I never could turn aside into paths of wickedness again; but, alas! how soon do I find out the deceitfulness of my heart."

"More and more, do I think how particular I must be to set a consistent example. I can see that I do exert an influence, and I must try and have it an healthful one. As regards the external duties of a Christian, I do not begin to find the difficulty that I do with regard to the internal. Perhaps, if I was left to myself, I should not feel so, though I think, if I know my own heart, I am full as desirous to perform my private duties in a right manner, as my public ones: I know, I think, much more about them; still I may be mistaken."

"I hate to write to-night. For the last fortnight my mind has been greatly perplexed. I earnestly desire to do aright; but I am afraid I do not go to work in the right way. I try to keep my room, and to be indifferent to the things around me, and I am afraid by so doing, I produce a morbid state of mind. I get restless, unhappy and discontented, and I fear get excited religiously, for I know one can be excited upon religion as well as any other subject."

When *can* I get a more even state of mind. I certainly try, but I do succeed so poorly. Little things of no consequence, to which, my reason tells me plainly, it is folly to give scarce-

ly a passing thought, I pass hours brooding over. I have resolved now to try running away from thought. I know reflection is highly profitable, but it seems to me that I reap no benefit in reflecting, when I am in such a state of mind. How much I need counsel from some one older and more experienced than myself.

“ I think I see more and more of the duties of a Christian, of the trials and temptations incident to one, and the holiness, self abnegation and entire submission which is required. I begin to feel my religious life has all been wrong, though something, I know not what, causes me to cling to it, feeling that I cannot say, my heart has never been changed; still I do not feel that I am in the strait and narrow path *exactly*, which leads to Christ.

“ But drops of grief can ne’er repay
The debt of love I owe,
Here, Lord, I give myself away,
’Tis all that I can do.”

“ Would I could subscribe my name to this sentiment, and feel that I really did do the deed. I desire to do it, but I can’t feel it would be, *really* so. I am afraid I should be holding something back.”

Thus was I, longing and hungering after the prize, which was just before me, but which I failed to see.

Years passed on about in the same manner, though I had new trials and new cares; still I failed to see “*the Way, the Truth, and the Life,*” and to secure permanent peace — that peace which “*passeth understanding.*” It was a constant life of sinning and repenting, with a longing which naught on earth could satisfy.

In the Spring of 18—, Mrs. Morton, now I trust a saint in heaven, placed in my hand a work upon Christian life, and never, never can I forget the light which came to me through

its pages. The Holy Ghost came down with power, and revealed my Saviour unto me in a new way — *my keeper from sin day by day, if I would appropriate Him by faith, just as He had been, and was my Saviour from past sin.* I had been trying, as one has expressed it, “to subdue sin in myself; to conquer my evil habits; trusting in Jesus, as I thought, to help me to do it;” but not expecting Him to do it *alone* without my assistance. For *past sin* day by day, I saw readily, that I had nothing to do, but to cast myself upon His atoning blood; but, Oh! I little saw that for the *present*, I might rely upon Him in the same manner.

I never shall forget the time when this truth broke upon my mind; I was perfectly overcome with joy for a season, and going to the room of a friend, I told her of my discovery, and declared, over and over again, “I have found it! I have found it!” Yes, I had indeed found the royal road for Christians.

And now had I discovered what it was to take *Christ into the heart* for “*wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*” Had any one, however, told me previous to this, that I had, in a measure been trying to work out my own righteousness, I should have been surprised at such a charge, and should have replied: why, “Faith without works is dead.” I do trust in Christ to help me, but I must work, as well as trust. Ah! I knew little then, of that work which follows from faith alone, which results not from a sense of duty, but from an impelling principle within, an abiding Christ. Now it was more *faith* and works, before it was to a great degree, *works* and faith.

I should have said, however, some months previous to this, I was enabled to yield my will to the Lord in a matter, which I felt I never could relinquish; and Oh! the sweet peace which followed this act. By doing this, I think now, I was prepared for the new way into which my blessed

Master was to lead me ; for how can He abide fully in a heart which has an idol. I did not see that it was an idol then, as the thing of itself was right. I yielded the point because there was something ever whispering to me, that I must yield it. 'Twas the very last best thing I had to yield — my most precious desire on this earth.

Of course, it was now easy to consecrate myself fully to Christ ; the deed was soon done, and I waited for Him.

But though I saw Christ so plainly in this new relation, and was all ready to receive Him, yet I could not lay hold upon Him as I desired—could not believe. Ah ! one has well said that “believing is the most wonderful thing in the world.” I wanted evidence, too, that I *was* believing—was trusting. I found it difficult to venture right out on nothing apparent to the earthly sense ; and I did not venture at once, but clinging to this new revelation as I tried it, step by step, I found—timid soul—upon what a firm foundation I was stepping. I pressed forward, and finally felt assured. Glory to God ! I was indeed trusting. This state of trust commenced a golden era in my existence which has brightened more and more, the more I have seen and realized the presence of the Sun of righteousness.

And now illumined by His presence, I began to find how ignorant and helpless I was. I understood not Satan's devices and wiles, and often used to get bewildered by duty, faint over labor, or exhausted with temptation ; but come what would, I *would* not yield my trust. I held on, assured that the Master was leading me, and teaching me ; and Oh ! such lessons as I learned, eternity only can reveal. He led me on, and on ; sometimes on to Beulah, where I basked in his love ; then right down into the valley of temptation with Satan, where He withdrew Himself awhile : then He revealed Himself so lovingly again, and carried me into the green pastures of peace to rest. This life took on to me a wondrous beauty,

and I began to realize how much I had for which to live. The simplest duties of life were radiated by the thought, "I can do this for the Lord." My hatred of sin grew intense, and I felt keenly the approach of it. I could not now commit things which before I allowed myself to do, and dreaded, and tried to avoid the very appearance of evil. Day by day, as the Master found I could bear it, did He enlighten me upon holiness and sin. How did the one keep looming up higher and higher, broader and broader, while the other took depths, into which I almost feared to gaze.

And the Bible and prayer, how exceedingly precious they became!—the Bible seemed a new book, and eagerly did I search its pages; ever, now and then, finding some applicable and comforting truth, on ground over which I had travelled many times. Prayer became the season of all seasons; the best, when I could go from the world and be *so alone* with the precious Master, telling Him all my griefs, my cares, my wants.

But the life I now live, and have lived the past few years, is from the Son of God. Christ liveth in me, and therefore it is, that through all the sorrows and temptations of life, there is underneath the ripples of my heart an ocean of peace which passeth understanding. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose soul is stayed on Thee, "because he trusteth in Thee."

And now, my dear husband and children, I have given you a faint outline of what Christ hath done for me—a faint outline I call it, for words would fail to tell all the exceeding riches of His love and long suffering towards me, and the precious lessons of faith, hope and charity He has taught me. It is all a hidden, wondrous mystery—this inner life—and must be experienced, to be known and appreciated. I might say, too, as it was passing, I could not see and understand it as plainly as I do now, looking back upon it.

Do not think, however, because it was so long before I found Christ as my "All in All," that it need be the same with you. Not at all; for I know those who have pressed directly forward from the very beginning, and whose growth in grace and likeness to Christ have been evident to all observers; but I know there are many more, who seem to feel that the most important part is done, when they know their sins forgiven, and unite with the church, and who ever point back to this time as the evidence of their being Christians. Many, I think, are in ignorance — as I was — of all that it is their privilege and duty to attain unto, and follow rather the teachings and example of those about them than the directions of Holy Writ.

And now, I am well aware, you do not all understand, or appreciate what I have written; but I trust the time will come, when the Lord will use these lines for an instrument for your good.

Again I beseech of you, come to Christ your Saviour and Keeper; come and have His arms enfolded around you, His grace to sustain you, and His robe of righteousness to clothe you for the mansions above.

And now will you not grant me my last request, to make the Holy Bible your daily study; praying to Him to enlighten you, who has promised to guide you into all truth; and may I not hope that He will eventually guide you into Heaven. Affectionately your mother,

M. HUNTINGDON."

To no one, perhaps, of the Huntingdons, did these words come with so much power, and as good news to a thirsty soul, as to Margaret. She pressed it again and again to her bosom, while with streaming eyes, she murmured, "I see! I see. Oh! mother, you little thought how much

good you were to do me. I now see why we were so different." Then followed an earnest prayer of thanksgiving to God, for the glorious light which had broken on her pathway, and an earnest petition that He would indeed "guide her into all truth."

Bessie, after finishing the book, passed to Mrs. Livingston's room, and entering, said, "Aunty, am I mistaken, or deceived. It seems to me I do trust in Christ, just as mother did, and I am all at peace ; but something says, it cannot be, it is all presumption ; you do not know your own heart, and you have just begun a Christian life. By-and-by you will get cold and indifferent, and wound the precious cause of Christ. Oh ! aunty, it need n't be so, need it ? and isn't it Satan tempting me ?"

"I think it is, darling," replied Mrs. Livingston, while drawing her closely towards her. "You need never grow cold and indifferent to His love. You will probably have many temptations and sorrows, and God will perfect that which concerneth you, but He *will* keep that which you have committed to His charge, if you ever cling closely to His all-keeping hand."

"But don't you think mama kept close to Jesus ?"

"No dear, not at first. I fear she grew worldly, and perhaps became indifferent towards, if she

did not neglect, prayer and her Bible. Here are the places where young Christians first lose their hold. After they have joined the Church, they seem to feel, if I may so express it, that they are safe, and Satan too often leads them captive. Guard your prayer and Bible seasons, with a jealous watch; allow nothing to interfere with them, or to abate their interest. If you do not find a growing love for the Bible, and day by day, a more earnest desire for the precious 'audience time' with the Master, do not hope you are growing in grace, you are certainly losing somewhere.'

"O, I do feel that," replied Bessie. "Sometimes I can't wait till the time comes, and so I go away before. I think, too, I begin to know what 'praying without ceasing' means, for I pray many times now during the day. It seems to come to me."

"Yes, that is it," returned Mrs. L., with a beaming countenance. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And now I am going to send you away from me, for it is my prayer time, and I wouldn't be late you know."

"Why, aunty," replied Bessie in a reproachful tone, "why didn't I see it was half-past. Forgive me," and with a fond kiss, Bessie passed into the privacy of her own room, to pour out her grateful heart to Him who was waiting to hear.

To Edward and Louise, their mother's journal was just such a mystery as she supposed it would be. Louise sighed, and thought she never could be such a religious enthusiast, and that there was no need of it; but she commenced to read her Bible, and resolved she would try and live a better life in future.

Edward wondered greatly, how his gentle mother could have ever written such severe things against herself, and finally came to the conclusion that her ill health had probably rendered her morbidly sensitive. He then rather congratulated himself that he was not inclined to such feelings. That night, just as he was retiring, he recalled her request about the Bible. "I wish," said he to himself, "she had asked me to do anything else in the world; I could have done it; but to read this" — taking up a small Bible which she had given him — "is a regular bore."

As he opened it, his eyes rested upon the last chapter of Revelations. He read it through — re-read it, then dropping the book carelessly down, retired to rest; but he did not forget that chapter.

Georgie perused only a few pages of Mrs. Huntingdon's journal, then she closed the book, and with tearful eyes laid it away, murmuring, "I can't read it now: no, it would crush me."

CHAPTER XV.

LATE one evening, a few days after the events referred to in the last chapter, Louise Huntingdon was surprised by a summons from her father to the library.

"What can it mean, at this time of night?" said she, questioning Georgie, who stood looking wonderingly at her.

"I don't know," replied Georgie, quizzically, "unless it is an offer of marriage."

"Don't! Georgie," returned Louise, in an annoyed tone.

She started out of the room slowly, and evidently much bewildered, at her father's unusual request; but she was gone only a moment, before she returned, breathless and pale. Holding her quick, beating heart with one hand, she gasped out to Georgie, "Oh! Georgie, I know what he wishes of me. I do believe Davenport has sent in that bill for my dress. Oh! dear, dear, if I hadn't been sick I should have paid for it, and pa would never have known about it! What shall I say to him? You know how he hates deceit, and he has

utterly forbidden us ever to make a charge at any store. I can't go down to him; I can't bear his reproofs! You go for me, Georgie. Where's Bessie? perhaps she will go."

"Stop!" said Georgie, laying her hand upon Louise's shoulder, as she was passing out of the room. "Don't get Bessie to go. Do be brave, and crush down such cowardly feelings. You will have to see your father sooner or later; so go down and tell him how it all happened. Besides, Bessie don't know anything about it; and perhaps your father wont mention it, and then she need not know it at all."

"But I can't go anyway," returned Louise, now in tears. "What shall I do? Dear me! I am so weak, and just this, has brought on that pain in my side again. Oh! do you go for me! Tell pa, I'm sick, I'm sure it is the truth," and still weeping, the nervous girl flung herself upon the bed.

Georgie went up to her side, and brushing back her hair, kissed her fondly and said, "Poor weak child! you are sick; I *will* go down for you. One of these days, though, perhaps you will be as brave and well as I am."

With a firm step, Georgie passed down to the library and knocked.

"Come in," returned a voice, the tone of which

Georgie eagerly marked. It was a little lower than usual, and more saddened, so she decided it was just as Louise feared.

"Ah! it is you, Georgie," said Mr. Huntingdon, as she entered, "I was expecting Louise. Be seated."

"No, thank you," said Georgie. "I have only come to tell you, that Louise is sick to-night, and says she can't come down. Can I not do your message?"

"Louise sick!" returned Mr. Huntingdon, somewhat surprised. "Why she was well enough this evening, and received company in the parlor. Has she retired?"

"I think not," replied Georgie, "though she was lying down when I left her."

"Well, then," said Mr. H., somewhat sternly, "Tell her I wish to see her a few moments. If she is unable to come down, I will go up to her."

"But couldn't I carry the message?" continued Georgie.

"Not at all," replied Mr. Huntingdon, in such a manner, that Georgie saw it was of no use for her to say more, so she left the room immediately, and informed Louise of her father's request.

"Oh! it must be about that bill," said she, "or he would have excused me. I must go then, there is no help!"

Rising, she advanced tremblingly towards the door, and slowly passed down stairs ; then knocked at the library door.

“ Come in,” said the same voice, and Louise entered. She just caught sight of a bit of paper in her father’s hand, then she sank down on a sofa which stood near the door, and covering her face with her hands she burst into tears, saying, “ Oh ! father, you’ve got that bill. Do forgive me ? I know you hate me, and I hate myself ; it’s the first time though, I ever did such a thing.”

Mr. Huntington now arose, and seating himself beside Louise, he took her up from the arm of the sofa, and said tenderly, “ Louise, my erring child, I do forgive you. Now try and compose yourself, and we will talk about it, for I want you to tell me how it all happened.”

As Louise felt the strong arms of her father about her, and heard his gentle tones, she grew more calm, and in a few moments related truthfully all the circumstances concerning it.

“ I am glad you have been so truthful,” returned Mr. Huntington, “ and that you assure me this is the very first time you have thus done so entirely contrary to my wishes. You know how particular I ever was with Edward about this one matter, and that it is not at all the money I care for, it is the *principle*. I give you all just as

much money as I wish you to spend, and I feel you are in a measure robbing me, when you thus take advantage of my credit, to contract a debt so contrary to my wishes. I have never liked any way the 'trusting business,' and I shall never allow any of my children to do it, as long as they are under my care. I hope Louise, this will be the last time it ever happens. I should be very unhappy, if I thought I had a child that I could not trust"—

"Oh! father, father," sobbed Louise, "this shall be the last time I assure you! I don't believe I would have done it anyway, if it had not been for Bell Rivers; she persuaded me to do it, I did not want to, at first."

"You should have had strength of character enough of your own, to have resisted whatever Miss Rivers said," responded Mr. Huntingdon, "still I am sorry to hear she has such an influence over you, and more sorry for Edward's sake, that she possesses such principles."

"May be, pa, Edward will correct them in her; you know she has no mother to teach her what is right, and her father lets her do just as she pleases."

"Poor child! she is to be pitied," returned Mr. H., "but I cannot let her ruin my Louise, and now I must tell you, what I have feared I should

be obliged to for some time. I do not approve of a number of things I have observed in Miss Rivers ; she lacks principle, and as you are so greatly influenced by her, I think you had better drop her, as an intimate friend. Were you of a stronger mind I should not advise this ; but you are so swayed here and there by just the influence which surrounds you, I wish that influence to be good. You can see less of her certainly, than you have done ; both your aunt and myself approve of this."

"Does aunt Livingston know about this ?" said Louise, anxiously.

"Yes," replied her father, "I have been talking with her nearly all the evening about this matter, and you know she is to take the place of your mother now, and I shall have no secrets from her as regards your welfare. You understand our wishes about Miss Rivers. As Edward's friend she will occasionally visit here, and you can treat her as an acquaintance, but no more. Mrs. Livingston will help you manage this, so you needn't give offence to Miss Rivers."

"Oh ! pa, this is very hard ; she is my dearest friend ; and she will certainly notice the change, and Edward, too."

"Perhaps they will," replied her father, "but we cannot help it if they do ; it must be done any-

way, and one day you will thank me for this, my daughter. If Edward speaks to you about it, refer him to me."

Mr. Huntingdon now passed to the table, and taking up a paper placed it in Louise's hand, and said, "There is the amount; go down to-morrow and settle the bill; I shall deduct this, from your next allowance."

Louise took the money and bill silently, and then glancing timidly up, said, "You do forgive me, don't you."

"Certainly," said her father, drawing her to him, and kissing her forehead, "and now, go my child and ask forgiveness of your heavenly Father, whom you have offended more than me."

Louise passed out with a lighter heart than she entered, but still with a new pain, for she felt just what her father intended with regard to Miss Rivers, and that it must be done. It was seldom Mr. Huntingdon ever commanded his children, but when he did, they knew he was to be obeyed. Actively engaged in business, and engrossed with his invalid wife, he had not marked Louise's conduct during the past few years. He thought her a little heedless, but he was wholly unprepared for what Mrs. Livingston had informed him of her character, which she had so well read since coming into the house; and it was principally

from what she had said, that he had forbidden her farther friendship with Miss Rivers. It was only after much prayer, that Mrs. Livingston had given this advice. She pitied Miss Rivers, and she determined to do her all the good in her power, but she felt her first duty, was for Louise, and she must be removed from her influence as far as possible.

Bell soon marked the change in Louise, and so did Edward ; therefore, one day he asked Louise for an explanation. She referred him to her father.

“What do you mean?” said he.

“You must ask father,” replied she, “I cannot tell you,” and left the room.

He passed directly to his father’s library, and entering rather rudely, asked in an excited tone, “What fault he had to find with Miss Rivers?”

“Be seated, and recover yourself, sir, and I will tell you,” said his father, somewhat sternly.

Edward seated himself, but evidently more excited then when he entered. His father then gave him his opinion, candidly and calmly, regarding Miss Rivers, and his determination about Louise.

They talked a long while, Mr. Huntingdon endeavoring to reason with and to counsel Edward, but all in vain. Finally, in the midst of the con-

versation, Edward suddenly arose, and declared in passionate tones, "If Bell was thus to be regarded, she should never enter the house again, neither would he." Actuated by this feeling, he quickly strode out, paying no heed to his father, who endeavored to detain him. Mr. Huntingdon immediately sought Mrs. Livingston for advice. They hardly knew what to do, such a proceeding was so unlike Edward; they had expected some opposition, should he notice Louise's manner, but not in such a form or degree.

Edward had only gone a few steps after he left his father's home, before he encountered his friend Mr. Belmont.

"What's your hurry?" said Mr. Belmont, stopping him.

"Hurry! hurry!" returned Edward, excitedly, hurry enough. I wish I was dead! Go your way and I'll go mine," and he endeavored to shake Belmont off, who had taken his arm.

But Belmont saw he was in a very unhappy state of mind, and would not leave him, so passed on with him, saying, "My way shall be yours, just now. Come, Ned, I have always told you my troubles; won't you tell me what's the matter; maybe I can help you."

"No you can't," said Edward, "Nobody can help me. I'm a wretched, miserable fellow!

You'd better go and see Bessie, maybe she'll tell you — maybe she has already, ha, fellow?"

"Not at all," replied Belmont. "Come, let's take a stroll on the Park,"—which they were just passing. "It will be more quiet there," and Edward suffered Belmont to lead him into the Park.

Hours passed away, but still the friends wandered up and down, Edward by degrees relieving his heavily charged heart of its sorrow.

Kindly and tenderly, his friend advised and reasoned with him, that it was not Bell his family disliked, but her conduct; that he had often himself been pained by it, and that he must not forget his sister's good, in his interest for another. If Bell changed—and if she loved him, she certainly would change,—he well knew how ready they would be to receive her to their hearts again.

"You have been very rash," continued he, "but don't, I pray you, make the matter worse. Go home, you know how alarmed they must all be; and Edward, no matter how trying this is to you, it seems to me, just now, you ought not to add an additional sorrow."

Just here Belmont touched the right chord, and Edward replied firmly, but bitterly, "Yes, for mother's sake, I will go home and endure somehow, for a while, but only for a while; then they shall try endurance in return."

Belmont did not reprove this spirit of revenge ; he well knew his friend, and felt quite assured that time would disipate it, in a measure ; so he merely said, " Well, hadn't you better go now ? It's past one o'clock."

" As well now, as any time," replied Edward, and they turned towards home.

There was not one of the Huntingdon family that night, but heard Edward's entrance, and ascent to his room ; and while they were listening to hear if he remained, they caught Bessie's low voice, and assured that she would comfort him, if anybody could, they hushed their anxiety, and soon found rest.

Edward did not appear at the breakfast table the next morning, and Bessie informed them that he had gone to pass the day with a friend, on B——'s Island.

" Oh ! he appears so strangely," said she, " I do not know when he was ever so unkind to me before ; but he promised me he would not go away. He says Bell shall not come here again, and he intends to tell her all about the matter."

" Well, we must hope for the best," replied Mrs. Livingston. " He is in the Lord's hands, and we can safely leave him there ; can you not feel so, brother ?"

" Yes," replied Mr. Huntingdon, slowly, " I think I feel so now."

Mrs. Livingston's satisfied countenance told how much pleasure this reply afforded her; for vainly had she endeavored the evening before to persuade Mr. Huntingdon to seek rest, and leave Edward and his affairs in the hands of that One, who cared more for him than an earthly parent possibly could.

"O, how little we know what it is to trust!" continued Mrs. L.—"the most important lesson of our life, and the most difficult. And how exceedingly precious we find it when we begin to comprehend it in somewhat of its fulness and power."

"I wish I could be as trusting as you are," replied Margaret, "Bessie seems to be more like you, but then it is more natural for some to be more trusting than others."

"But," said Louise, "what is the use of being so trusting, you get so often deceived?"

"Not in our heavenly Father, of whom we are speaking, regarding trust," said Mr. Huntingdon. "Earthly friends may deceive us, He never will."

Louise made no reply, she knew her father meant no allusion to herself, and that he only replied generally to her remark, but nevertheless, she did personally apply it, and another one at the table even more closely than she.

The events of the past few days had fallen with

a crushing weight upon Miss Noble's heart. Louise had given her a full account of the interview with her father, and it was just as much as Miss Noble could do to control herself, and appear before Mr. Huntingdon. She could not raise her eyes to him, for she felt that he would read the very secret of her soul. Her anguish at times, was intense.

"Oh! where *shall* I go?" said she to herself, as she excitedly entered her room, after prayers. "I cannot stay here, I cannot bear it; I have no right to be here, either; I am a worse example to Louise than even Bell. I will not stay. Let me see," and all day long, and many days after, the busy, active brain was planning.

For the next month Edward Huntingdon was almost a stranger in his father's house. Mr. Huntingdon, Bessie, Mr. Belmont, and even Mrs. Livingston, had tried to conciliate him, but all in vain. He grew more indifferent and morose as each day passed, and it was with deep anxiety and pain that Mr. Huntingdon marked this change. There was not only such a painful change in his conduct, but in his countenance; now flushed, now exceedingly pale and haggard; they feared, though they did not dare to whisper it to each other, that terrible blight, dissipation. They divined also, from what they observed and heard,

that he suffered from other troubles, which wore heavily upon him.

One day Mr. Belmont called, and suggested to Mr. Huntingdon, to send Edward to South America on business, instead of one of his clerks, "but, don't intimate to Edward," continued he, "as you value his true interest, that I suggested this to you."

Mr. Huntingdon discovered at once how advantageous this would be for Edward, in his present state of mind, so immediately made the proposition to him. He received it indifferently, but nevertheless, his father knew that it pleased him, and in less than two weeks after, he left in the barque Mitchell, for Rio Janeiro.

CHAPTER XVI.

DURING this time, Margaret Huntingdon was passing through intense mental suffering. Her mother's religious experience had opened her eyes to her own spiritual wants ; and eagerly did she seek for the same experience, though tossed and torn with many conflicts and temptations. Her Bible became her constant study, and she sought instruction from all the religious works she could command, but in vain ; her way seemed to grow more and more dark. Often there seemed to come to her a gentle voice, saying, "Seek the counsel of Mrs. Livingston, or Mr. Leslie," but this she could not do. Her pride rebelled again and again. "No, indeed," she said, "I never could tell them how I feel ; what would they think of me ? No, I will keep my feelings all to myself ; the Bible is enough, that will teach me ; I shall come right by-and-by : " and Satan thus most effectually hindered her progress. She did not see the mountain Pride straight before her, which she never could get round or over, and so she wandered in temptation and conflict ; till at last, one day, she heard a faithful minister speak upon

“human means ;” that though God had the power to convert souls to Himself, and to lead them into righteousness without any teachings of man, yet He generally chose to use human means, as in the case of Saul and Cornelius, and the eunuch to whom Phillip was sent. Margaret now plainly saw that it was her duty to seek some of the Lord’s chosen ones for direction. The struggle between duty and pride was severe and lasted long ; till finally, the proud heart broke, and Margaret murmured in lowly penitence, “Lord, to whom shall I go ?” The answer came slowly, “To your pastor.”

Oh ! how tremblingly she approached his house a few days after ; but when she reached it, her courage forsook her, and faint and weary, she returned home, but only to weep and lament that she did not take up the cross and enter. Again she started weaker, oh ! much weaker in herself than before, but stronger in Christ. Her constant prayer was, “Lord build thou me up. Enable me to perform Thy will ;” and He, the ever ready, ever willing Strength, supported her ; and she found herself, she hardly knew how, one evening, unbosoming her long sealed, proudly sealed heart, to that one, of all others, she felt should never read its records.

After some general conversation on the object

of her visit, she said, "Mr. Leslie, you can scarcely imagine how bitter I have felt towards you all this time, and how I have avoided you whenever I could, for fear you might mention the subject to me ; and I have not only felt this bitterness towards you, but towards all who seemed to live this holy and devoted life. I thought they had too good an opinion of themselves, that it was all self-righteousness."

"You understood them, probably," interrupted Mr. Leslie, "to speak of a work that *they* had done, and were doing ; not a work *Christ* had done, and would continue to do."

"Yes, I suppose so," continued Margaret, "though I thought I was only zealous for the cause of Christ, when I condemned them. Yes, I really thought, and I rather feel it now, that they consider themselves, and all that they do, perfectly correct and proper ; that they think they cannot err in the least : and it seems to me that it is perfect sacrilege to feel so. There is no one perfect but God."

"Yes, Miss Huntingdon, there is indeed no one perfect but the immaculate, almighty, unapproachable God. Even the angels, though perfect in their sphere, are as nothing in comparison to this glorious perfection of the Godhead ; but here let me read you a selection from a favorite author of

mine." Rising, Mr. Leslie went to his library, and taking down a book, slowly and thoughtfully read as follows :

"The highest perfection which man can attain while the soul dwells in the body, does not exclude ignorance and error and a thousand other infirmities. Now, from wrong judgments, wrong words and actions will often necessarily flow. And in some cases wrong affections also may spring from the same source. I may judge wrong of you, I may think more or less highly of you than I ought to think. And this mistake in my judgment, may not only occasion something wrong in my behavior, but it may have a still deeper effect; it may occasion something wrong in my affections. From a wrong apprehension, I may love and esteem you either more or less than I ought. Nor can I be free from a liableness to such a mistake, while I remain in a corruptible body. A thousand infirmities, in consequence of this, will attend my spirit till it returns to God who gave it. And in numberless instances it comes short of doing the will of God as Adam did it in Paradise. Hence the best of men may say from the heart,

"Every moment, Lord, I need
The merit of thy death;"

for innumerable violations of the Adamic as well as the angelic law. It is well, therefore, for us that we are not under these, but under the 'Law of Love.' Love is now 'the fulfilling of the law,' which is given to fallen man. This is now with respect to us the 'perfect law.' But even against this, through the present weakness of our understanding, we are continually liable to transgress. Therefore, every man living, needs the blood of atonement, or he could not stand before God.

"What is then the perfection of which man is capable, while he dwells in a corruptible body. It is the complying with that kind command, 'My son give me *THY* heart.' It is the loving the Lord his God with all *his* heart, and with all *his* soul, and with all *his* mind.

"St. Paul, when writing to the Galatians, places it in yet another view. It is the one undivided fruit of the Spirit which he describes thus. The 'fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, (so the word should be translated here), meekness, temperance.' What a glorious constellation of graces is here !"

"Do you understand it now ?" said Mr. Leslie, smilingly.

"Yes, indeed," replied Margaret. "O, how greatly have I misunderstood, and misrepresented it too. But I did it ignorantly."

“I suppose so,” replied Mr. Leslie. “I know many Christians now, who are doing the same thing, and they are probably no more aware of it, than you were. And now, Miss Huntingdon, to the point. Have you consecrated yourself *fully* and unreservedly to Christ? When you joined the Church, I suppose you gave yourself to him according to the light you then possessed; but you now have greater light, and see that you have more to give. Are you willing to give yourself—all that you possess, and are—entirely to him? Can you say this?”

“Take my soul and body’s powers;
Take my memory, mind, and *will*,
All my goods and all my hours,
All I know and all I feel;
All I think, or speak, or do;
Take my heart—but make it new.”

Margaret was silent for a few moments, and then she replied slowly and tearfully, “It seems to me I can. I think when I was willing to come and see you about this matter, I yielded the last thing in my way; and oh! how it crushed me to do it. But, Mr. Leslie, maybe there is something I do not know or think about now, that I ought to consecrate.”

“We are not required, Miss Huntingdon, to consecrate unknown things. Give what you now possess, and when new blessings or objects are

given to you, consecrate them also. Keep all on the altar, day by day. Can you give up all that you now *knowingly* possess?"

"Yes," replied Margaret, "yes, I am willing; everything! but oh! maybe God will call upon me to do something that I shall not be willing to do. I am afraid I can't keep in this submissive, consecrated way."

"Satan would like to frighten you, if he could," pleasantly replied Mr. Leslie, "by placing some great mountain in your way, which exists only in your imagination. One thing is certain, God does not give grace for imaginary duties; it is too precious to be wasted: and another thing, He will give you grace for every trial he wishes you to endure, and for every duty He calls you to perform, if you accept it, and thus will make you willing and ready to perform it. Oh! Miss Huntingdon, let the future all alone. This life, like our earthly existence, is only a *present* life. We can live only a *moment at a time*, and you must shut yourself up to living by the moment. *This* moment you have the 'blood which cleanseth from all sin;' this moment you have His abiding presence, His strength, His wisdom, His righteousness—if you appropriate it by faith. The next moment you have nothing to do with. Ah! it is sweet, very sweet to learn to be a *moment* Christian; then we know and feel what *dependence* is;

what it is to be *nothing*, Christ *everything*! Do you think that you can live this way? and are you not now ready to believe, that Christ immediately enters your heart, the moment you consecrate it all to Him?"

"Yes," said Margaret, "I am, for He has promised it, and I do not dare to disbelieve Him."

"Unto you, therefore, which believe, He is precious," replied Mr. Leslie.

Margaret bowed her head on her hand a few moments, and then raising it, a holy smile radiating her face, she sweetly, mildly said, "Is this all? Oh! how sweet, how pure I feel. Christ is in my heart, I know. But oh! will He, will He keep—yes!" and again the smile came more beautiful than before. "Yes, He *will* keep me, for *He* has all power. If He can keep me one moment, He can another; and oh! I've only one moment to live at a time. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, my Saviour, my all!"

Softly and tenderly Mr. Leslie now sang:

"Complete in thee, no work of mine
May take, dear Lord, the place of thine,
Thy blood has pardon bought for me,
And I am now complete in thee.

"Complete in thee—each want supplied,
And no good thing to me denied;
Since thou my portion, Lord, will be,
I ask *no more—complete* in thee.

“Complete in thee, forever blest,
Of *all thy fulness*, Lord, possessed,
Thy praise throughout eternity—
Thy love I'll sing, complete in thee.”

And now began Margaret's *real* life. At first Satan took advantage of her naturally strict sense of right and wrong, and urged her into an over-scrupulousness of conscience. But the Lord showed her the error, and day by day, she grew more charitable, and unwilling to judge others; so all took knowledge that she had been with Jesus. Then, too, she sought for a time to make her experience agree with others, and felt discouraged when it did not; but again the Lord came to her relief, and assured her that He was leading her through a different path from those about her; and then she felt content to have an experience of her own. Then, her naturally severe manner of speaking, caused her great sorrow. She saw how much it hindered her usefulness, but “grace will conquer it,” said she; and expectant she prayed and waited, and gradually she saw it vanishing away, melted down by Divine love.

“Oh,” said she to a friend whom she was endeavoring to lead into the true Christian life, and who spoke of some who professed it, as not living up to it; who at home were a trial and grief to their families—“My friend, I fear they do not

possess it. If they do not evince the in-dwelling Christ at home, radiating all their actions and words, how can he be in their hearts? They must be mistaken. True, they may be, and often are, misjudged by those who are prejudiced, and know not the influence which controls them; yet as a general thing, the 'inner life' hid in Christ must tell upon all around. If you hear them called 'fanatics,' 'enthusiastic' or 'self-righteous,' don't wonder, for the 'offence of the cross' has not yet ceased; but if they are spoken of by those who are charitable and discriminating, as being discontented, selfish, neglectful, censorious and unkind, O, these are not the fruits of the Spirit. They deserve just censure."

Margaret could well say this, for she knew her Christian life now corresponded with her words, though she saw much—and every attainment only discovered more—which she longed to attain unto.

She especially sought to abound richly in that love which "suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth *all things*, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and which never faileth."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE winter passed very quietly with the Huntingdons. One Sabbath however, there was, for memory ever to look back upon with increasing delight; the day when Mr. Huntington, Mr. Belmont and Bessie consecrated themselves publicly to the cause of Christ. Margaret also renewed her vows that day, being received by letter; and it was indeed a precious Sabbath unto her. During the winter she and Bessie found it their most delightful work, to minister to the poor, the sorrowing and the needy, and they ever found Mr. Huntingdon and Mrs. Livingston efficient helpers as well as advisers.

Louise, debarred from her usual pleasures, by the season of mourning, passed her time principally in pernicious-novel reading, and "castle-building." She never forgot Mr. Carleton; and often looked forward with pleasure to his return in the spring. She would hope, even against hope, and comfort herself with "Perhaps he isn't engaged," "There's many a slip between the cup and the lip," or "who knows what *may* happen." Thus

dreaming and sighing, although every member of the family tried to rouse her to some exertion—something worthy of herself—she passed the time away.

In early Spring, Mr. Huntingdon decided to accept a proposition from Mrs. Livingston, which she had been urging during the winter, that the family should all go to Easy Hall, till the next winter. Mr. Huntingdon was especially affected in his decision, by Louise's health, and was greatly surprised when she manifested, not pleasure, but disappointment, at the arrangement. Margaret and Bessie were delighted at the change, while Georgie evinced but little interest any way.

The grass was just peeping above the bare earth, and the merry birds beginning their morning concerts, when the Huntingdons went to Easy Hall. Days and weeks passed before they were domesticated for the summer. Bessie could find no place so satisfying to her as the attic, and so begged her aunt to allow her father to partition her off a little room up there, which would include an east window overlooking the village and surrounding country—a great attraction for her. It was from that attic window, one morning, while gazing upon the beautiful harbor, and the back ground of their landscape, she saw for the first time, her "field of labor." It was early morning,

and round many a little cottage door in the village beneath her, she noticed groups of children, some poorly clad, others better, but all evidently belonging to the laboring class of society. As she gazed upon them, and watched their sports, her heart warmed, and her imagination grew very busy, weaving a plan for the coming summer.

She could hardly await the completion of "morning duties," which, at Easy Hall, were performed with that exactness and propriety which left many hours for work and enjoyment, not found in those households where any slight, but interesting matter, may be allowed to interfere for ten, perhaps for twenty minutes, with the general routine of the house. So Bessie knew better than to mention her plan till Mrs. Livingston returned to her room for the day.

Then she entered, eagerly exclaiming, "O, aunty! I have done nothing but cultivate patience all the morning! It has seemed to me as if you never would get through 'mothering.'"

"Why, I have not been very long," returned Mrs. Livingston, glancing at her watch, "beside, it is Monday, you know, and I always have a little more to attend to. But now what is the matter, over which you have gained such an amount of patience?—though if it is a long story, I will take my work—'a moment saved, is a moment gained.'"

“ Well, take your work,” said Bessie, “ for then I shan’t feel hurried ”—and while Mrs. Livingston was getting it, she continued, “ This morning, as I was looking from my window, at the ‘ harbor view,’ I noticed the children of the village out at play, and now I know, from what you have told me, that I can do good amongst them,”—

Just here, Margaret entered.

“ O, you here !” said she to Bessie. “ Well, no matter ; you can hear as well as aunt. I came in, aunt Livingston, to tell you of a little project, about which I have been thinking, and—”

“ O, Margaret !” broke in Bessie, “ I am just telling one of mine to aunty, mayn’t I finish it ? I’ve been waiting so long.”

“ Can’t you cultivate patience, a little longer ? ” said Mrs. Livingston.

“ Yes,” sighingly replied Bessie.

“ No,” returned Margaret, “ You were here first, and I interrupted you ; so continue your conversation, I can wait, easily.”

Bessie glanced up for Mrs. Livingston’s approval, and meeting it, continued, “ Well, Margaret, I was telling aunty about my seeing the children of the village out at play, and that I wanted to do them good, in some way, and I thought—”

Here Margaret interrupted again with a merry laugh, and said, “ Well, I declare, just what I wanted to speak with aunt about. I noticed a

number of children playing in the streets yesterday afternoon, and have been thinking how I could interest them on the Sabbath. There is no service in the afternoon at the —— church.”

“Did you think you would have a Sunday school?” said Bessie.

“Yes,” said Margaret, “Why?”

“Then we are agreed,” replied Bessie, for that was exactly what I was to propose to aunty.”

“And exactly what I intended to propose to you both, this week,” returned Mrs. Livingston.

“How singular!” said Bessie, “that we should all be thinking of the same thing.”

“You will often find it so,” replied Mrs. Livingston. “The Lord generally prepares all those He calls to perform special work in His vineyard.”

After some further conversation about how they should proceed with the school, they decided to go out two afternoons the coming week, in the village, to obtain scholars.

“Where shall we hold the Sabbath school?” said Bessie; “you haven’t any room, aunty, exactly right.”

“No,” replied Mrs. Livingston, “and though I might use the dining room, yet I had rather obtain a room in the village, if possible.”

“Don’t you think we might secure the village school house?” said Bessie.

“I doubt it,” returned Mrs. Livingston, “for

some who control it would not consent, I think, for a Sabbath school to be held in it. We might try, however."

The trial was made, but they were unsuccessful, and also in one or two other places for which they applied.

"Isn't there a hall in this house?" said Margaret, as they passed one of the village hotels.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Livingston, "but I hardly think the proprietor would let it for such a purpose. He is quite a stern man, and I don't think it would be of any use to ask him."

"Mayn't I try?" said Bessie, glancing up at the bar-room windows.

"Yes," responded Mrs. Livingston, "there's no harm in trying, but I can't encourage you as to your success."

"Well," replied Bessie, glancing up again more assuredly, "I think I will try. Somehow I seem to have that faith I shall not be denied. Will you wait for me? or you can walk on; I can overtake you."

"No," said Mrs. Livingston, "We will go in to Mrs. Ireton's,"—which was on the opposite side of the road—"and make a call, and then you can join us."

The hotel keeper had noticed from his windows, the ladies conversing together, and glancing toward the house, so that when he saw Bessie came

on to the piazza, and heard her knock at the bar-room door, he was prepared to meet her.

"Come in," said he.

Bessie hesitated at entering, but as she heard again "come in," in rather a louder and more urgent voice, she opened the door, and just stepped in.

"Excuse me," said she hastily, and nervously, too, "but I have a favor to ask of you."

"Wont you be seated?" replied he.

"No, thank you," returned she. "Would you be willing to let your hall every Sabbath afternoon, to Mrs. Livingston?"

"What for?" responded he, gazing quizzically at her.

"For a Sabbath School," replied she. "We would pay you well for it. There are so many poor children around here, and they pass all the Sabbath afternoons playing in the streets, and we have been trying to find a place, but no one will let us one; now, wont you? We'll pay you well."

"No; I can't let my hall in any such way," replied the landlord.

Bessie gave him one quick, sad glance, and only saying, "I am very sorry," turned to leave the room.

"Stop!" said he; "I said I couldn't let my

hall any *such* way, but you can use it. I don't want any pay."

Bessie stood looking wonderingly at him for a moment, then comprehending what he had said, she gave him one of her own merry, winning smiles, and replied. "Why sir! you are too good, I didn't expect it."

"Didn't!" replied he, "Well, you can have it, and welcome, this way;" and turning round, the stern landlord busied himself about some things on the bar.

Bessie walked as decorously as possible across the street, and quickly informed Mrs. Livingston of her success, who could hardly persuade herself that Bessie was speaking the truth.

The calls upon the parents were made, and proved quite successful; for when the Sabbath came, Mrs. Livingston, Margaret, Bessie, and some friends of theirs, met eighteen children, boys and girls, in the Central Hall, which had been swept, cleaned and arranged, for their comfort and convenience. Amongst the pupils were two children of the landlord's, bright interesting girls. These two, with three others, comprised Bessie's first Sabbath School class.

Margaret took an older class of misses, from twelve to fourteen, while Mrs. Livingston superintended.

"How sweet it is to work for the Lord," said Mrs. Livingston to Margaret, as they were returning home from the Sabbath School.

"Sweet," replied Margaret thoughtfully, "yes, indeed! It seems to me as if I had only just now begun to live. I felt a little sad at first to leave my poor people in the city, but see how soon the Lord has given me again, souls, precious souls, for which to labor. I find my pupils very interesting, and I know I shall love them. I only wish I could see them oftener than on the Sabbath."

"Ask the Lord and He will give you opportunities," replied Mrs. L.

Just here they missed Bessie, and looking back perceived her coming across the dam, with quite a flock of children about her.

"See," said Mrs. Livingston, "the little shepherdess and her lambs. God grant that she may be a faithful one unto them."

Here Margaret heaved a little sigh, which did not escape Mrs. Livingston, and she said, "Why do you sigh Margaret?"

"Because I wish I was more like Bessie; she is so winning and simple, every body loves her; just see how quickly she has won the hearts of those little ones."

"Bessie has a different nature from yours,

Margaret," replied Mrs. Livingston, "and as you say, all love her. She is thus eminently fitted to do much good in the world, and in this respect, God will require more from her, than from you. But Margaret, 'love begets love,' and though you may be longer winning the affections of those with whom you come in contact, persevere, you will finally succeed."

Bessie now joined them, and half breathlessly exclaimed, "Well, I have work enough now on hand! We were admiring the flowers—the children and myself—as we crossed the dam, and one little bright-eyed girl—Maggie is her name—asked me if I wouldn't go up to the hill with them some time to gather flowers, and so I promised them to go next Saturday, which is their play-day; so you see I'm getting plenty of occupation."

"Just the best kind in which you can be employed," returned Mrs. Livingston.

But the coming Saturday, Bessie was not engaged in rambling over the hill-side with her Sabbath School children, but writing a letter, a part of which was as follows:—

"A minister's wife! Why, Harry, I am the last person in the world, fitted for such a position. I never had even the pleasure of being acquainted with one, unless I except aunty, who held that po-

sition for a year ; then dear uncle Livingston died. But I never could be such a woman as she is, and I am sure, I should know nothing of the duties required of so important a person as a minister's wife. No, no, I *could* not be one. Are you quite certain it is your duty and calling to be a minister? Hasn't Mr. Leslie rather persuaded you into it? for I know he is extremely partial to you. Do think this matter *seriously* over, and consider, how unfitted is such an inexperienced, simple child as Bessie Huntingdon, to go in and out before a people—to be a pattern unto them. No, Harry, my whole nature cries out against it. I do believe, if you conclude to be a minister, it will be my duty to resign my place to some other, but Oh! —

“The above may seem to you written rather lightly, but I assure you I feel this deeply, I can't persuade myself it is true. I do want to be an instrument of doing a great deal of good in the world, but I shrink from such a position. I have not told aunty about it yet, but I shall to-night ; and her opinion, of course, will influence me a great deal. I must acknowledge that I fear to ask her. O, I hope she wont agree with you.”

Later that evening, Bessie Huntingdon was seated in Mrs. Livingston's room, while Mrs. L.

was reading Mr. Belmont's letter to Bessie, in which he informed her of his determination to study for the ministry.

Tear after tear trickled down Mrs. Livingston's face as she perused the letter, and once or twice Bessie caught the ejaculation, "Thank God." The moment she finished reading it, before she could speak, Bessie seated herself on a low stool at her feet, and burying her face in Mrs. L's lap, said, in a trembling, weeping voice :

"Oh ! aunty, I know just what you are going to say ; just what I don't wish you to, for I can't be a minister's wife, to have everybody watch me and criticise me ! If I was fitted for one, why, it would be different, but I am not."

"Bessie," said Mrs. Livingston, in a grieved tone, "I am surprised !"

"Yes, I know you are," returned Bessie, "you have always thought me so good ; but now you see just how wicked I am. I have tried to feel right about this, but I can't ; it's not that I do not wish to labor for my precious Master ; no, indeed ; I will work in any place but this ; I could be a teacher now, quite contentedly."

"Thy will be done," replied Mrs. Livingston, slowly and emphatically.

Bessie was silent a few moments, and then she raised up her face, and smiling through her tears, said :

“Is this the *Lord's* will concerning me?”

“Do you not see it so?” returned Mrs. L.

“No,” replied Bessie, “I had not looked at it as His will exactly. I felt that it was more the will of Mr. Belmont, but I see it now.” Then, soon after, she continued slowly, though tearfully, “Yes, ‘His will be done,’” and the head was bowed again.

“Bessie,” said Mrs. Livingston, “it is well that you have learned thus early that ‘it is not in the way of man to direct his steps.’ We often propose to ourselves a certain sphere, where we think we are fitted to labor, and build hopes and lay plans about it. Suddenly the hopes are laid low, the plans defeated, and we find to our regret, that we are not doing God’s will but our own, though we think we are doing His will, because we are laboring for good, and that all good must be His will. Now I have not the slightest doubt, but that our heavenly Father has called both you and Mr. Belmont to the spheres you have in prospect; and from what I have judged of your nature, instead of your being unfitted, you are eminently fitted for the place.”

“Why, aunty, how can you think so? I, who lean so much upon my friends, to be a leader and exemplar to others! I, who have no experience of the world, and know so little what is required

of a minister's wife ! Why, I should n't know how to do a single thing ! ”

Mrs. Livingston smiled, and patting the head before her, replied,

“ Well ! well ! it will be more than three years before you will be required to assume such a position, and in the meantime, you can be fitting yourself. Shall I tell you my feelings with regard to a minister's wife ? ”

“ Yes, aunty ; for if I have got to be one, I want to be one of the best. I have heard people find fault with ministers' wives, and I have wondered if they were to blame. Don't you think more is expected of them than should be ? ”

“ Not generally,” said Mrs. Livingston, “ for what woman is there, who holds such a position, for example and influence, as the wife of an earnest, devoted pastor. All the world recognizes the importance of her position, and they have a standard by which they try her, as well as their pastor ; and in general, I do not think this standard too high. Every woman, therefore, who assumes the place of pastor's wife, knows that there is this standard existing, and it will ever remain, and all she can do, she cannot alter it ; therefore, she ought to recognize it, and endeavor to conform herself to it. It wont do for her to say, ‘ I married my husband, and not his church.’ This

may be true, in one respect, but it involves a false feeling in it ; for the interests of his church and himself are so intertwined, that to make her husband a happy and useful man, she must marry, in a certain way which she ought to understand, his church as well as himself.

“ If there is any woman who should be consecrated, soul, mind and body, to the Lord Jesus, it is a minister’s wife. She is not one to be conformed to the world ; to ‘ set fashions,’ or even to follow them so closely as to be marked. Ah ! how grieved was I, to hear a young Christian once remark to me, ‘ Why, Mrs. A.,’ referring to her minister’s wife, ‘ is the most fashionable lady that goes into our church ; everything she has is so fine and nice, and she dresses with such exquisite taste, you cannot help noticing her. And again, another young lady remarked to me, in whom I was endeavoring to cultivate simplicity of dress, ‘ Why, there is Mrs. B. ; she is the minister’s wife, and she doesn’t dress simply at all.’ I was obliged to tell her, that she must not look to ministers’ wives for patterns. Christ was our only example.

“ But though this is true, and we cannot and ought not to make patterns of ministers’ wives, yet many will do so, especially the weak lambs of the flock, and therefore, how exceedingly careful

should they be, that they do nothing but what they are willing should be copied."

"Ah! but aunty," said Bessie, "this is hard, and who can do it? I am sure I shall not."

"As your day is, so shall your strength be," replied Mrs. Livingston. "God does not place us in any position, but what He will give us sufficient grace — if we seek it — for that position; therefore, if we fail the fault is only in ourselves. Another reason why a minister's wife should be 'consecrated, soul, body and mind to the Lord,' is, that she has more opportunities than many other women to do good, and people rather expect from her, as from the minister, words of Christian advice and comfort. Her very position affords her a peculiar power and freedom, and therefore, what might be taken amiss from another, would be considered only perfectly proper from her. She can introduce about what plans she desires amongst her people, and the minister's wife 'says so,' is often taken as a standard for right or wrong."

"Well, aunty," said Bessie, "I feel more and more how little fitted I am for such an one. You yourself must feel it too."

"I am glad you feel it so sensibly," replied Mrs. Livingston, "for I trust your very weakness will enable you to rely wholly upon Him who is your strength. I should feel much more alarmed for you,

if you felt equal to the task, for then, I should fear you would undertake it in your own strength, which would be perfect weakness, and result in an utter failure."

"But, aunty," said Bessie, after a few moments pause, "don't you think sometimes, that people of a parish expect too much *work* from a minister's wife, visiting the sick, attending the meetings, &c."

"Yes, Bessie, I agree with you here, for we have often seen it, that when a minister's wife begins to go in and out amongst the church, it happens, as with her husband often, there are incessant demands upon her time, and unkind feelings if she does not accede to every one of those demands. Now, I believe our kind Father has given each one of his children just so much labor in the vineyard to perform, that we are not to be continually hurried in this world, and that there is a limit to work, and I believe if we make it a subject of prayer, we 'shall be guided into all truth,' in this matter. Here you, as a pastor's wife, would need teaching from above, to see just how to use your time to the best advantage for your own soul, your family, and the good of the parish. And the minister's wife should be frank with the people about it, tell them how she has arranged her affairs, and what she can do for them, and what

she can not. Nearly all the fault finding in the world arises from ignorance, and I have often found it the best way to silence fault finders, to let them know as far as I thought proper, what I have to do, and ask them to arrange it better for me. Afterwards I have found them the ones to say, 'you had better know about her affairs, before you speak, she has many a care of which you know nothing.' A friend of mine told me, that at one time she remarked to another lady, 'that she was surprised her minister's wife hired so much sewing done. She kept a seamstress the whole time, and she did not see how her husband could afford it, as he received but a small salary. She said she had totally forgotten the circumstances, until one evening, when she was visiting at the minister's, and they were conversing about how one could employ her time the most worthily, the minister's wife remarked to her with charming frankness,

'Some people think that I ought to sew more ; but from childhood I was very slow with my needle ; besides, sitting at sewing a long time gives me a severe pain in my side, and I have found from experience, I can do but little of it, and keep well. I therefore hire a sewing girl for my family, but I earn her wages all myself, in one-sixth the time it would take me to do her work.'

'Ah !' said my friend, 'is that so ?'

‘Yes,’ said the minister’s wife. ‘I write a little story now and then for the children, and the receipts fully pay my servant, if not more ; and then I have so much time to visit my people, and to do for others, that I can never thank my Father enough for the talent he has given me.’

My friend told me that this proved an excellent lesson to her. She could never forget it, and often relates the story, when she hears any one uttering a rash judgment.”

Mrs. Livingston and Bessie sat some time longer conversing, and when Bessie returned to her room she took out her letter and commenced on another page. “It is the Lord ; let Him do what seemeth Him good.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

A H, how wearily passed all this time to Louise Huntingdon. It was in vain that her father and Mrs. Livingston reasoned with her, and endeavored to rouse her to something which would benefit her health, and in time, interest her; they could effect no improvement, and therefore her health grew more and more delicate. Finally her father became quite alarmed concerning her, and at her physician's recommendation, concluded to send her for a while to S—— Springs, in hopes that the water and change might benefit her. At first he thought of sending her under charge of Edward, whom he expected home in a few weeks, but just before the time Louise had arranged to leave, Edward wrote that he should stop at Cuba on his way home, so they need not expect him till Autumn; and now, as Mr. Huntingdon could not possibly leave himself on account of business, he concluded to send Louise with Georgie to accompany her, under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Marchmont, intimate friends of the fam-

ily, who intended to pass some weeks at the Springs.

Even the thoughts of the trip seemed to arouse and strengthen Louise, and she exerted herself more to prepare for the journey, than she had done during the past six months. To an attentive observer, Georgie was, if possible, more pleased than Louise, though she evidently tried to conceal her satisfaction. Finally the last dress was made, and the last day passed, for one at least, at Easy Hall.

The close of the next day found them at S—— Springs. Then commenced “life” for Louise—about the same routine every day—three or four hours passed in dressing, four or five more lounging about the drawing room and piazzas, with an occasional ride, and a daily walk to the “springs.”

The greatest desires of her heart were satisfied, in receiving abundance of admiration and attention. She found also, with so many surrounding her, she could forget Mr. Carleton, in a measure, though now and then there would come a pang, as she compared him with others.

“I suppose it was society she needed,” said her father to Mrs. Livingston, after reading one of Louise’s letters, in which she had mentioned her restored health, and how thankful she was he had sent her there. “I am sorry she is so fond of it; I wish her tastes were more like Margaret’s and Bessie’s.”

“The Lord only can change her heart,” replied Mrs. L. “She is entirely engrossed with this world and its pleasures, and you cannot persuade her but that we are all wrong in our views of life, and she right. She has often said to me, ‘it is my taste makes me so different from you. I cannot find any pleasure in such common place affairs as you do, and I do not know why I should be blamed for having such taste ; it was born in me.’ Well, experience will teach her at least, and she is in the Lord’s hands, and He will lead her, just as it is best.”

“What is the matter with you Georgie Noble ?” said Louise, one day. Why, I never saw you so nervous ; first you are looking out of this window, then out of that, and you keep yourself in a constant motion.”

“What is the matter ? ” replied Georgie, turning round from the window, and gazing steadfastly at Louise, “why I wanted to see if it was going to rain ; I am going out.”

“Oh ! dear me,” returned Louise, “how you can enjoy such long walks I don’t see ; why you were gone nearly three hours yesterday, and Mrs. Marchmont became so alarmed that she spoke of going in search of you, for fear some accident had happened to you.”

“Was that so?” replied Georgie. “Well, I shan’t go again after to-day to worry her. By the way, Lulu, I wish you’d lend me some money; I want to purchase some things, and I haven’t enough.”

“Well, take what you wish,” returned Louise, “My purse is in my drawer.”

Georgie opened the drawer, and, without looking in the purse, took it up, and placed it in her pocket, then turning round she came to Louise, who was lying on the bed, and said,

“Lulu, how much better you do look. I must kiss you this morning,” and bending down, she kissed her a number of times.

“Why, Georgie Noble,” returned Louise, “what is the matter with you? Seems to me you do appear very strange to-day, When can I remember of your kissing me before!”

“Do I?” responded Georgie, turning to her wardrobe. “Well, don’t get worried if you shouldn’t see me by noon, and tell Mrs. Marchmont I will take care of myself.”

A few moments more and Georgie passed out saying, “Good-bye, Lulu. Let me always see you looking just so bright.” When the door was shut, she stopped a moment and seemed to be undecided about something, then murmuring,

"Better not," she passed on quickly, down the stairs and out a side entrance.

Noon came, but no Georgie, and Mrs. Marchmont was again uneasy over her long absence. Coming into Louise's room, an hour past noon, she said,

"Miss Huntingdon, I don't exactly like these long rambles of your cousin. I don't see what she can find with which to amuse herself so long. To tell the truth, I am a little suspicious of her. She has not an open frank way in speaking about it. But there, perhaps I ought not to express myself so. I only mentioned it, thinking perhaps you might have noticed something strange in her."

"I have not before, until this morning," replied Louise, "and then her conduct seemed very strange to me, and I spoke of it to her, but she did not pay much heed to it. She said she should not go out again, after this morning, and that if she did not return by noon I must not be worried. She is naturally of the disposition you find her, besides she has some private troubles which make her more reserved, I think." Just here they were interrupted by a knock at the door, and on Louise opening it, a porter handed her a note directed to herself.

"'Tis from Georgie," said she, in a surprised

tone, as she took it, and glanced at the handwriting. Opening it, she found another note directed to Mrs. Marchmont, which she passed to that lady, saying, in a more excited tone, "What does this mean?"

Mrs. Marchmont nervously opened hers, but read only a few lines, as Louise suddenly exclaimed, "Oh! Mrs. Marchmont, I shall faint—pass me that—that—" but the words were lost, and Louise lay in a death like swoon. Mrs. Marchmont rang the bell immediately for assistance, and administered the remedies she had at hand. But, ere assistance came, Louise revived somewhat, and recovered, so as to be conscious. She was placed upon the bed, but she said nothing, and as she seemed tranquil, Mrs. Marchmont took up the letter which Louise had dropped, and hushing her own trembling heart, she read.

"DEAR LULU,

How sweetly you are sleeping now, at this midnight hour, little dreaming what cousin Georgie is doing.

"Two—three letters has she written, and now the last one she will ever write as she *is*—is commenced. Twenty-four hours hence, oh, Lulu! where and what will she be? Shall I tell you? can you not imagine it? Draw down your head and I will whisper it; far from you, forever parted from you, forever united to another—a wife! Yes, Lulu, twenty-four hours hence, I shall be the wife of Mr. Saybrook. You

know better than any one else *how* I have loved him, and what an idol he is to me. Yes, I do worship him. I know he has faults, one very great one—but my love o'erlooks them, and I have faith he will overcome them.

“ I know neither your family, nor my own,—what is spared to me—approve of my choice, but I marry to please myself; and as this month has made me a free woman, I feel at liberty to follow this choice. Mr. Saybrook has been in town during the past week, and you can now imagine with whom I have been taking my long walks. We are to be married at a cousin's of his, Mr. Wm. Saybrook, to-morrow morning, at eleven o'clock. This cousin lives about five miles from S—, on the road to B—, in a large white house, a weeping elm in front. I mention this to you thus particularly, because I shall expect a visit from you, and Mr. and Mrs. Marchmont, day after to-morrow. Now you may wonder why I do not invite you to the wedding. I did think of it at first, but was afraid, as Mr. and Mrs. Marchmont do not understand my affairs, it might produce an unpleasant explanation, if not serious trouble, and Lulu, I would not invite you without them, as it might in some way place you in a false position. You understand me, you might get blamed unjustly at home, perhaps. I expect your family, especially your father, will be very much displeased at my taking this step, and indeed I am very sorry to cause this displeasure; but how or what else *can* I do? I am *determined* to marry Mr. Saybrook, and I am quite positive your father, as well as my step-father would never consent to it. I therefore take the matter into my own hands, and am willing to abide by the consequences. I do hope, though, it will not cause you any uneasiness or unhappiness. I have written to your father and told him all the circumstances. Please read this to Mrs. Marchmont, to whom I have also written, informing her of my intended marriage, and inviting her to call on me.

“Trusting to see you both Thursday morning, at eleven o’clock, I remain,

Yours affectionately,

GEORGIE NOBLE.

Wednesday morning.

“I will return soon the money I have borrowed of you, as I am expecting some every day. I was obliged to take it all. I shall send for my trunks this afternoon. They are nearly all packed. Will you please have them in readiness when they are called for, and oblige

G. N.

As Mrs. Marchmont finished it, she raised her eyes, and saw that Louise was gazing at her, and evidently waiting for her to speak.

“How do you feel now, Louise?” said she.

“A good deal better,” replied Louise, “though my head is weak, and a little bewildered. Oh! Mrs. Marchmont, how could Georgie have done so! What will papa say? Oh! I know he would have had her married at our house if she had spoken to him about it. Where is the letter, I want to read it again?”

“Had you better now?” returned Mrs. Marchmont.

“Yes,” replied Louise; “it’s just as well as to be thinking about it. I sha’n’t faint again. I shouldn’t then, if it hadn’t come so suddenly. I haven’t read all the letter.”

Louise perused it again, and then laying it aside, she attempted to rise.

“Oh! don’t, said Mrs. Marchmont, springing to her side. “Don’t rise now; you are too weak. What do you want? I will get it for you.”

“Nothing,” replied Louise, dropping back upon her pillow. “I only thought I would try to get Georgie’s things ready for her trunk.

“Let me attend to them,” said Mrs. Marchmont, “you can tell me what they are, and which trunks are hers, and I will pack them.”

“Oh! dear,” said Louise, as she watched Mrs. Marchmont, “I *can’t* believe all this. Georgie Noble married! What will her father say? Why, she was sent to our house just to get her away from him, because her father thought him unworthy of her. He is addicted to drinking, I believe, and now to think that she has married him after all! She has corresponded with him all along. I never thought that it would result in anything, or I would have told father about it, although I promised her I wouldn’t. I wish now I had told him. I am afraid he will blame me.”

“You certainly ought to have done so,” replied Mrs. Marchmont, “but I do not think he could have hindered it eventually. Georgie is, as she says, free, and can marry whom she pleases, but I am sorry to have such a noble young woman thrown away upon a worthless man.”

"She loves him so much, perhaps she will reform him," returned Louise.

"We can hardly hope for that," replied Mrs. Marchmont. "It has been well observed, if a woman's love cannot effect a change before marriage, it is not very likely to do it afterward."

"Oh! dear," returned Louise, "but what a way to get married! What will our friends say, and the people here. What *shall* we tell them?"

"We can say that she has gone to some friends of hers a few miles above here," replied Mrs. Marchmont. "I am afraid, however, that the truth will soon come out; it's rather difficult to keep such matters hushed up, especially in a place like this."

"Then I want to go home," said Louise. "I couldn't endure such disgrace. Oh! I am all of a flutter; how this has unnerved me."

"Poor child!" returned Mrs. Marchmont. "I am afraid this will undo all the good you have gained here. Do try and compose yourself. By the way, had you not better come in my room; it is more cheerful there; you can see out on the street. These trunks are now quite ready."

An hour later and the trunks were sent to their destination, a note also, saying that "Mr. and Mrs. Marchmont and Louise would accept the invitation of Mrs. Saybrook for Thursday morning."

The day after, Georgie's letter to Mr. Hunting-

don, was received at Easy Hall, and produced much sorrow and consternation amongst them all.

"I do not know as we could have expected anything else," said Mrs. Livingston. "Georgie has a very determined will."

"It does not surprise me," said Mr. Huntingdon, "for I have noticed for quite a time that she has seemed very absent minded, as though she was planning something, and I have rather feared, from what Edward remarked to me before leaving, something of this kind; still I thought her good sense would have led her to have sought an honorable way of marriage—one that would have been pleasing to us all. Her father never would have given his consent to the marriage, but I do not think he would have forbidden it; and I had decided, had she spoken to me about it, and seemed resolved to marry him anyway, to have given her a wedding, as I would one of my own daughters. I am extremely sorry she has done so, the effect is so hurtful, both upon her character and her happiness. Besides, it is setting a bad example to others."

Much of the above Mr. Huntingdon wrote to Georgie, and also to Mrs. Marchmont and Louise. He also invited Georgie and her husband to visit Easy Hall at their convenience, and enclosed a check of \$200 for a wedding present.

Mr. and Mrs. Marchmont and Louise made their

visit to Georgie, as they had promised, and they were all agreeably disappointed in Mr. Saybrook, whom they found an intelligent and pleasing gentleman, though Mr. Marchmont detected readily a want of resolution in his character, which told too well that he would easily succumb, in an hour of strong temptation. No marks of intemperance were now to be observed, and Louise returned home quite hopeful that Georgie's love and care would eventually save him.

The next week, the day before Georgie's departure to her new home in the West, she received Mr. Huntingdon's letter, and many were the tears she shed as she marked its kindly tone and fervent wishes for her happiness, many also, her regrets that she had not opened her heart to her uncle, and pleased him and the whole family, who had ever been kind and attentive to her, by a satisfactory marriage. She wrote again, thanking him for his kind wishes, the invitation to Easy Hall, and the check, which was extremely mortifying for her to retain under the circumstances, but which she did not dare to return. She said nothing, however, about her regrets at the manner of her marriage—her proud heart rebelled against acknowledging them—and, therefore, her letter failed to produce that satisfaction it would have done had she frankly expressed them.

A week or two after Georgie's departure, Louise

became very anxious to return home. As Mrs. Marchmont feared, Georgie's marriage began to be whispered about suspiciously, and Louise found herself placed in a very disagreeable position, when questioned about it. Besides, she could not bear the knowing looks which passed around, and wrote to her father to come immediately after her. She returned, therefore, to Easy Hall, quite contented, glad to escape for once from the fashionable world.

On her way home in the cars, while reading a newspaper, her eye caught this insertion among the marriages:

"In New York, Aug. 20th, by Rev. Wm. Hamilton, Herbert Carleton, Esq., to Mary Bartlett, youngest daughter of Hon. George Cushing."

No wonder a sudden film came over Louise's eyes, and her head fell heavily back against the window; no wonder that her temples throbbed, and that her heart beat quick and heavy; no wonder, too, that her whole nature cried out for "home," even the "dreary one" at Easy Hall. One thought now only seemed to dwell in her mind, and that with a heavy, stinging power. "Can it be that I have so encouraged others, that they have suffered as I am now suffering, without such encouragement. Oh! then is my punishment just; how thoughtless, how wickedly thoughtless, have I been!"

CHAPTER XIX.

LOUISE'S journey had been beneficial to her more than in the recovery of her health ; she did not forget at once the mortification she had experienced at S—— Springs, nor the self-condemning, though wholesome, thoughts following upon her discovery in the cars. She really commenced practising and studying, and rode horseback with Bessie, much to her aunt Livingston's satisfaction.

One evening, about a month after her return, she followed her father into the library, and placing before him a letter, said, "Father, will you please read this, and tell me what you think of it?"

Mr. Huntingdon took the letter somewhat wonderingly, and slowly perused it. Smilingly he laid it down and said, "Well, Louise, it's a veritable offer, isn't it? But who is this Mr. Kemp? I have never heard you speak of him."

"No, father," replied Louise; "it's a gentleman Mr. Marchmont introduced me to at the Springs. He was very kind and attentive to me all the time

I was there, but I had no idea he cared for me, save as a friend, till I received this."

"What kind of a gentleman did he appear to be?" returned Mr. H.

"Well, to tell the truth," responded Louise, "I am afraid you wont like him, he is so much older than I am; he is forty at least, if not more; is rather good-looking, well educated, very rich—so they say—and was considered quite a chance at the Springs. He is in business in New York. Mr. Marchmont would tell you about him; and perhaps it is as good a chance as I shall get."

"Louise," said her father in amazement, and somewhat sternly, "you surprise me. Do you love this man? You talk as though you were arranging a matter of business."

"Love him! yes, I love him as well as I do any gentleman."

"My child," continued Mr. Huntingdon, "I do not know what to make of you; your love for Mr. Kemp does not appear to me to be such as I wish one of my daughters to give to any man. Do you think Bessie would speak about Mr. Belmont as you do regarding Mr. Kemp?"

"No, father; no indeed," replied Louise, brushing away a tear, which he did not fail to notice; "but I do respect Mr. Kemp highly, and by and by I do not doubt I shall love him. I do not think

I shall ever see any one I can love better. I know I shall not *now*."

The *now* was so mournful, it opened a page in Louise's life that her father had never supposed existed there; but he only said tenderly, "Well, Louise, I will make inquiries about this gentleman, and if I find no objections, you can receive his attentions."

Louise waited patiently till her father's return from the city the next day, and was not surprised when he said, "Louise, I have inquired about Mr. Kemp, and I find him a very moral, respectable man, though he is not a Christian. But his age is seriously, a great objection. Why child! he is nearer fifty than forty—as old as your father. Do you think you can call such a man husband? and do you not think you had better wait? If you loved him as you ought to love a husband, it would be a different thing. I told him that I should be happy to have him call upon us, but I felt that I could not commit you, my child; so I said you would give him an answer to his letter after further deliberation. I feel as though you must wait some time at least, before you engage yourself to him. I am afraid you don't know your own heart just now."

"Yes I do," replied Louise, shaking her head; "and you will let me tell him how I feel about it, will you not?"

"Yes," hesitatingly returned her father, "if you will add all I have said."

"I will do so," replied she, "but my mind is decided; I do not think I shall alter it. I never liked those "young fops" you have seen me with so much. I talked and laughed with them, but that was all. I know I should prefer an older man, any way."

"Well," responded her father, "it is of course your happiness, and your's only, I wish to consult. I know this matter of age does not affect his character, but still I had rather you would know him and yourself better, before you decide."

No further reference was now made to the matter, and Mr. Kemp became quite a welcome visitor at Easy Hall. But though Louise manifested respect and seemed to enjoy his presence, there was a quiet easy nonchalance in her manner that pained Mrs. Livingston.

Often she and Mr. Huntingdon had conversed upon the matter, and as often came to the conclusion that nothing could be done. Mr. Kemp had been fully informed how Louise regarded him, but he was satisfied with it, and felt quite assured he would in time win her love. Mr. Huntingdon proposed to them, at first, separation for a while, and a journey to Europe for Louise ;

but she would not accede to the proposition. Settled in her own mind, however, she became more and more companionable, and interested in the affairs of those surrounding her. She even offered to teach the little girls of the Sunday School to sing Saturday afternoons, and became quite interested in it.

CHAPTER XX.

THE Sunday School, during the summer, had been carried on with commendable zeal, and the number had increased from eighteen to thirty. To Margaret, it had been a great care, but also a great pleasure. While Mrs. Livingston had her household duties, and Bessie, Mr. Belmont, to divide their thoughts, Margaret's were principally centred on the Sunday School, particularly her class. She had had them meet her every Wednesday afternoon, for instruction, in a variety of ways. A number of her class were poor girls, who would hereafter probably work at some trade, or labor as domestics for their support, so she taught them all kinds of handiwork, in which she herself excelled. She also instructed them intellectually ; and to interest them, and to impress some lessons more vividly, and without personal allusion, upon their minds, she wrote a story, and read them two or three chapters as they met. These were rare seasons to the young misses, and Margaret soon found from many little evidences, that she had indeed won their love. These marks

of affection fell like sunbeams on her love-desiring heart.

She was not only interested in her class, but visited and became well acquainted with the parents of her scholars, and often gave them a helping hand. It was at her suggestion, that their household duties were arranged more methodically, and they learned from her both the sentiment and the practice of, "a place for everything and everything in its place."

One day, after Mrs. Livingston returned home from a round of calls, she went into Margarct's room and said, "Margaret, you must read that story to me, you are writing for your class. I called to-day upon two or three of the parents of your scholars, and they had scarcely anything to speak about, save you and your book. Mrs. Rogers fairly kept me a good deal longer than I ought to have staid, by quite an account of it, that Ellen had given her; so now, wont you let me have the pleasure of reading it myself, or of hearing you read it?"

"Why, aunt Livingston!" replied Margaret quite abashed, "it's only a children's tale; it pleases them, but you would soon get tired over such a simple story; beside, you would find so many errors in it; the children can't discover them, you know. No, don't ask of me such a favor."

But Mrs. Livingston was not to be denied, and finally, Margaret was obliged to read her some chapters.

“Margaret,” said Mrs. L., as she finished them, “why don’t you publish that book?”

“Publish it!” replied Margaret, “why, what do you mean?”

“I mean what I say,” returned Mrs. L., “it is very interesting, and well written, and I think you can easily dispose of it at one of the Societies.”

Margaret was indeed surprised at Mrs. Livingston’s proposition, but the more she considered it, the more inclined she felt to try it.

“To be sure,” she reasoned with herself, “I never thought of such a thing as writing a book, but then, aunt Livingston has good judgment, and she would not propose it, if the book were not worthy of being published; beside, if I get anything for it, I can purchase some more books for our library, and we really do need them. Well, I will try.”

And so, with a letter of introduction to one of the publishing houses in C——, from a friend of the publisher, Margaret started off one pleasant Autumn morning with her first attempt at “book-making.” It was with great nervousness and trepidation that she announced her desire to the “pub-

lisher," expecting in reply, "Well, we are very sorry, but we have so many offers of such books;" or, "so many on hand now, we must decline it;" or, "we would like to publish it, but really, business is so dull now;" but no, he asked for the manuscript, and just turning it over, said he would look it through at his leisure, and she could call again for his decision. That it was not immediately refused, was decidedly encouraging to Margaret, and she descended the stairs with a lightened heart, but only to ascend them in a few weeks with a heavier one.

When she entered the store, the publisher was engaged, and so her heart was kept alternating between hope and fear a long half hour, as she studied all the bindings of the various books before her, wondering what hers would be like, then chiding herself for such a presumptive thought, "Of course the book wouldn't be accepted."

At last the publisher approached, and told her, with what seemed to Margaret a very long introduction, that her book had been examined by the "board of publication;" had been accepted and placed on the list for publication; but at present, etc. Finally the understanding was, that it was to be published jointly by the "board" and himself.

Margaret's heart was now almost too full to

she speak, but she endeavored to behave very quietly just as though she had expected it. Taking up a book before her, she turned over its leaves and said, "Well, I would like to take the amount you intend to give, in books for our Sunday School library. When can I make a selection?"

"Just when you please," said he; "to-day, if you like; a clerk will attend to you."

And Margaret commenced her selections for the dear children in B——. It would be hard to say which she enjoyed most, her imagination that afternoon, how they would be received, or the actual witnessing of it some weeks after, when covered in their neat brown covers, each child was furnished with one.

Margaret's unlooked-for success with her first book, now woke her to the realization that God had entrusted her with a talent, that she could use for His honor and glory, and earnestly did she now desire to find opportunities thus to use it.

During the summer, she and Bessie had often mentioned how they wished they could have a building of their own, for their Sunday School, for then they could use it on other occasions, and sometimes on Sabbath afternoons they could have "meetings."

They mentioned their desires to Mrs. Livingston, and she was as interested as they were.

"We must trust," said she; "there are a number of our persuasion in town, and who knows but that, sometime, we may get a small church here?"

"A church!" said Margaret, "O, how delightful that would be! Father says he has promised you to pass the summers here, and it would be so convenient and pleasant to us. It is needed in town, also; many would come to our church that do not attend others."

Margaret did not forget the matter, and her pen, prompted by a powerful motive, began to move again. She did not reveal her intentions, and only said, "she was writing another book."

The Autumn days passed quickly, and as December approached, the inmates at Easy Hall began to make preparations to leave for the city. Edward Huntingdon had not yet returned, and wrote them "that they need not expect him till Christmas, when he should certainly be with them." During his absence he had faithfully corresponded with Bessie, and occasionally with his father. Lately his letters had assumed a very different tone; and all became quite convinced that in answer to the fervent effectual prayers which had been so often offered for him, he would come back to them a changed man.

Only a few days before the family were to leave for the city, Margaret surprised both her father

and Mrs. Livingston, by an earnest request that they would permit her to remain at Easy Hall during the winter; "I can come up nearly every week and see you," said she, "but I do so want to be here over the Sabbath, and keep up the Sunday School, and instruct my class as I have been doing. I think I can find some young ladies to assist me in the Sunday School, and you will grant me this pleasure, will you not?"

When her father was convinced that it would be indeed a pleasure, and Mrs. Livingston also approved it, he willingly consented that she should remain, with the understanding that she was to visit them every week.

And now, when Margaret was left sole mistress of the house, servants and herself, she was indeed in her element.

Ah! those were joyous days which followed, when seated alone beside her bright wood fire, her pen flew over the pages of her consecrated book.

How radiant her countenance was at times, as she felt assured that every word was written for her Master's sake!

How she enjoyed, too, at eve, her "still hour," when the fire was the only light about her, and alone in the country quietness, she confidently communed with her ever-present abiding Friend—so different from the cold and almost heartless de-

votion of only one short year ago ! Truly, truly, she could say, "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet. I will be glad in the Lord."

CHAPTER XXI.

EDWARD did come by Christmas, and a happy united family was it, that gathered around the fireside Christmas eve, to listen to Edward's journeyings.

Many a meaning glance was exchanged between the various members of the family, as he now and then dropped words full of deep meaning to them—words which told that the heart of the speaker was at rest. Finally, he turned to his father and said with tremulous utterance,

“Father, I do not wish to dampen our joy this evening by referring to the past; but I can hesitate no longer, and wish now in the presence of all, to beg your forgiveness for the disrespectful words I used to you, regarding Miss Rivers, and for the pain I caused you all afterward. I shall ever bless you that you sent me away, and that God met me, and taught me how erring I had been. And I do trust in future to be more considerate and loving, not only as a son, but as a brother. I cannot begin to tell to you all I have suffered in lashings of conscience and anguish of

mind. I felt it keenly and intensely before I left you, but I could succeed occasionally, by dissipation and gaieties, in driving such feelings away ; but when I came to be alone on the ocean, Oh ! then I suffered what no tongue can describe ! In bitter anguish I turned at last to my Bible, and after much conflict and despair, I found the Saviour of our blessed mother, whose last words rung in my ears and never left me, from the time I first perused them."

There were tearful eyes all round, as Edward spoke these words, and a dead silence followed as he concluded, for each heart was too full for utterance. Finally, Mr. Huntingdon said, " Shall we return thanks to God," and kneeling, the full hearts found vent in prayer.

When they arose, Bessie passed quickly to the piano, whispering to Mr. Belmont, as she passed him, who joined her ; and then with their sweet voices they sang,

" Blest is the Christian's tie that binds."

And thus closed Christmas eve with the Huntingdons.

It was only a few days after Christmas, that Edward Huntingdon stopped Mrs. Livingston, as she was entering the parlor after tea, and said,

"Aunt Livingston, when may I see you? I wish to have a long conversation with you."

"Just now," replied she. "Will you come up to the sewing room? we shall be more alone there."

"Now, aunt," said Edward, after they had reached the room, "I am going to make you my confidant, just as Bessie does, and I want you to deal as frankly with me, as you do with her; will you?"

"Yes, I will endeavor to," replied Mrs. L., her face radiant with happiness, at this expression of Edward's confidence in her.

"Thank you," replied Edward, "and now let me tell you my trouble at once. You know Miss Rivers perfectly well, and in what a relation I stand to her. Before I left, you could but observe that there were other matters which tried me, save the troubles at home. One of the principal, and the most trying, was the conduct of Bell. After the trouble here, she grew very bitter towards you all, and seemed determined to wreak her revenge upon me. She tantalized me in every way possible, and I felt at one time that she would be the ruin of me. You probably noticed that I began to take intoxicating liquors; the fact was, I was getting desperate through her conduct, and my other trials; and had not father proposed to me to go away, I hardly know what would have

become of me. I clutched at the proposition, as a dying man would at a straw, for I felt that I was fast losing my self-control and self-respect, and desired nothing so much, as to escape from home and my troubles. When at sea, as I told you Christmas eve, my anguish was deeper, but different ; it was only for my sins ; and, oh ! with what a crushing weight did the remembrance of them fall upon me. Then, separated from Bell, I began to see her character in its true light, and how infatuated I had been ; still I felt that I had been much to blame, and when I recalled how she had been petted and idolized by her father, and bereaved of a mother's care, my heart bled for her, and I could not blame her. Then in deep anguish, I wrote her just how I felt, and besought her, as she loved me, to do differently, should we be spared to meet again ! Months passed ; oh ! what anxious months those were to me, but I received no answer. I could never have borne, it seems to me, this suspense, if there had not been a new strength given to me to endure ; for during this time I made as I felt, my peace with God.

But as I said, months passed and I received no answer, and the time came for me to return. I felt that I could not come back just then. I wanted to hear from her, and so I delayed. Finally a letter came, and with trembling hands I broke the

seal, and, oh ! how bitter was the reading ! The self-same way, the self-same tones, breathed in every word ; and I, who for the past few months had dwelt upon her only in a fancied loveliness of character, was now overwhelmed, with an ah ! too true picture of herself—just as I left her, just the same !

“ Oh ! what bitter tears I shed over that letter ! I did not write again. When I returned she received me much more pleasantly than I had expected, and then half apologized for sending me such a letter. It came so unexpectedly that I freely and fully forgave her ; and assured her that it was all past, and that I hoped, as I had changed, she would also, and then everything would be pleasant for us here at home, and indeed everywhere. I hoped for a while, but alas ! it was only for a while. There was no change !

“ And now I come to that about which I wish to ask your advice. In spite of all her unkindness and really wrong-doing, I love her ; yes, I do ! but I am not happy with her. My religious life suffers from every interview, and if I mention it, she treats it with indifference and scorn. I know not what to do ; I do not see how I can ever be happy with her now unless she changes ; but it seems as if it would cost me my life to give her up. And then, would it be right ? am I re-

quired to do it? What do you think? Tell me plainly."

"Edward," replied Mrs. Livingston, sadly, "you little know what a wound you have opened by your confidence, but I am going to repay it, and tell you what no living soul knows, save the cause of it. I will tell you my story first, and then we can speak better about Bell.

"The spring before your father left for Florida, Henry Livingston, cousin to my husband, came to Easy Hall to make me a visit. I had never seen him, as he went to Europe before I was married, and did not return to this country again till the winter before he visited me. During this time, his name had been a 'household word,' for he was as a brother to my husband. They were educated together, and when separated by Henry Livingston's going to Europe, they kept up a most lively interest in each other by a very frequent correspondence. I also shared in it, and thus learned to love my husband's cousin as a brother. After my husband's death he continued to write occasionally, and his letters were full of sympathy and consolation to me in my widowhood.

"As soon as possible after his return, he visited me, and Oh! Edward, it was as though my husband had returned to me from the grave—his looks, his gestures, his manner of speaking, and all. Can

you wonder that my heart was knit about him with strong cords. He had visited me only a week, when he was suddenly taken sick, dangerously so. I nursed him, and during five weeks, cared for him with intense interest and solicitude. He was delirious some of the time, and in his delirium revealed to me his love, and in piteous tones begged me 'to love him for himself, and not for Charles's, my husband's, sake.' Oh, those were sad days! By pitying him, I found that I did learn to love him for himself; and when he returned to reason, I never mentioned to him again any resemblance to Charles.

"Soon after his recovery, he left for the city, saying nothing to me of his love; but after a month had passed, he returned, and surprised me by saying that he had engaged rooms at the village hotel for the summer, as he felt his health would be better in B——.

"Ah! that was a pleasant summer—a very blissful summer!—till finally one evening, Edward, he told me how deeply he loved me. Oh! I feared then it was too idolatrous. I knew it afterwards. It was only a few days later when he came to me and said, he must tell me a little circumstance concerning himself, which he feared I did not know, but which he felt sure would not alter our relations towards each other. 'It is only a matter

of religion,' said he, 'and we can agree to disagree upon that. The truth is, I became a Roman Catholic while in Europe.'"

"*A Roman Catholic!*" interrupted Edward in amazement.

"Yes, a Roman Catholic," sadly replied Mrs. Livingston, while brushing away the fast coming tears. "Oh! Edward, the thick darkness that came over me then! I could not speak a word; I was stunned.

"'Why don't you speak?' said he tenderly, but very anxiously.

"With an agonizing prayer for strength, I finally spoke, and said, Henry Livingston, we must part. My heavenly Father is first in my affections, and I could not so outrage His dying love for me, as to countenance the horrible sacrileges of the Roman Catholic church, as I should do by a union with you; it would only be a union of hands, not of hearts.

"He grew deathly pale, and taking my hand in his, said sternly, 'Mrs. Livingston, do you know what you are saying? Will you dash aside thus ruthlessly my happiness for such a slight matter? Do you know I never loved a woman before? You cannot crush me thus!'

"Oh! Edward, that was a moment when the Tempter came in all his power and sophistry; but

the blessed Saviour was mightier than he, and I still held on to my faith, though my heart-strings seemed breaking. It must be so ! said I, rising.

“ ‘ Do you mean so ? ’ again said he, glancing up with a haggard expression.

“ Oh ! I do, I do, said I. Yes, Henry, I love you, but I love my precious, precious Saviour better, and I cannot be more to you than I have been, as long as you remain as you are.

“ ‘ Farewell forever, then, ’ said he, and quickly passed out of the house. I have never seen or heard from him since, save once, when a friend said that she heard he was in the Crimea. But, Edward, I have never regretted the step I took ; never. I cannot help believing that he will yet see and forsake his error ; I have faith.

“ I have ever felt that marrying an unbeliever is regarded too lightly by many calling themselves Christians. The Apostle has told us “ to marry only in the Lord ; ” and how can one who has renounced the world and its vanities, conscientiously join himself to another, the perfect enemy of the Lord, and surround himself with everything that will lead earthward instead of heavenward. There is no true sympathy in such a marriage, no matter how moral the irreligious partner may be ; and there is constantly an under-clashing of desire and sentiment. Little by little, without being

scarcely aware of it, the religious partner yields to the views and desires of the irreligious. Outward duties may be performed as before, but the inner life is not a rich, growing life. No, indeed, how can it be with such an influence so powerfully affecting it !

“ As regards you and Bell, the case is somewhat different. You have not sought her since you found the Lord ; but were you disengaged, I should regard it your duty ; and it should be your pleasure, to seek a good wife from the Lord and not from the world. Bell’s case is sad indeed ; there is much allowance to be made for her, and we must all make this a subject of prayer. You ought not, according to the way I view it, to marry her as she is , but you can wait for her a long while, and love her soul, and seek to lead her to Him who can change her, and create her anew in Christ Jesus. Make it a subject of earnest prayer, and cast even this care upon God. ‘ He will guide you aright about it.’ I would tell her how her remarks about your religion pain you ; and Edward, if she is worthy of you in the least, she will cease from love for you, if from no higher reason.”

But, as often we seem to be preparing for what the Lord is about to bring upon us, so Edward Huntingdon was only passing through these

internal conflicts between love and duty, to meet the last trial concerning Bell.

It was one evening as he left his closet of prayer to call upon her, that she entered the room dressed for the street, and said with an attempt at gaiety, "Ned, I have an engagement for this evening with a friend of papa's, a very intimate friend of his, and a gentleman much to my taste. And now, seriously, Ned, I must tell you what I have been considering for a long while, that I think our acquaintance had better cease. Your family don't like me, and I am sure I don't like them. I did like you, yes, love you, but since you have become so religious, I almost dread to see you! Now don't you think we had better part?"

"Yes, Bell, if it is your wish," replied Edward, "and I am glad you can so easily transfer your affections."

"O, you are just as jealous as ever!" replied Bell; "I think you ought to conquer that, now you are so good; but I shan't forget you anyway, though this friend of papa's will be more to my taste than you can be now. He asked papa for me to-day. You can come and see me sometimes. I am sure I shall always love you as a brother."

"Bell," said Edward, "it is all right; but should you see the day when you need a friend, when you find that this earth does not satisfy the

longings of your heart, Oh ! then seek that Jesus who has proved such a friend to me. Should you need an earthly one, do not hesitate to come to me."

"Yes, I will," returned Bell somewhat tenderly, "but don't feel angry at me for this ; I couldn't help it ; papa is so anxious for me to have this gentleman—he's very rich, besides other things papa likes about him—and then you and I wouldn't be happy, any way. I do think it's wise for us to separate."

"Yes," replied Edward, "it is probably wise, but I only wish you could have been won to Christ ; then we should have been happy together."

"Well, I don't see it so," returned Bell tapping her foot, "and I just hate this religion ! I don't believe in it ; I want to enjoy the world."

Just here the bell rang, and as a fashionable young man entered, Edward Huntingdon passed out. He walked rapidly home to seek immediately Mrs. Livingston, and to tell her all.

"As thy day is so shall thy strength be," said she as he concluded. "God will give you grace for even this."

"I feel it," replied Edward, "and know that it is necessary ; indeed, I am thankful that He has thus taken the matter into his own hands ; but poor Bell ! she has been very dear to me, and nature will suffer."

Supported by the conscious presence of Him who had given the stroke, Edward was much more cheerful than he imagined he could be ; and as his feelings grew more quiet, his judgment acquiesced more and more in the goodness of God even in apparent severity.

The winter and spring passed away very quietly with the Huntingdons—quietly as regarded outer life, but full of hopes and fears, temptations, struggles, conflicts and victories in the inner.

Perhaps no one had more influence over Georgie, when she was with them, than Edward ; therefore, at Mrs. Livingston's suggestion, he wrote to her, and gave a full account of his conversion ; and then closed with an earnest, loving appeal to devote herself to the service of God, to whom she had been dedicated by her mother in infancy.

But alas ! Georgie's heart was so engrossed with the world and her family cares, that she paid but little heed to his words ; and on answering his letter she did not refer to the subject in the least. Edward was not discouraged, but determined that she should be hereafter a particular object of earnest, persevering prayer, both for himself and all other faithful praying ones whom he could find to join him at the throne of grace. Just one year from the time Mr. Huntingdon and Bessie joined the church, Edward was received. Stand-

ing by his side, and baptised immediately before him, was an aged woman who had long lived in the family of Mr. Huntingdon, who guided Edward's tottering steps in infancy, and whom Edward had now guided to the Lamb of God.

Louise was now the only one left in Mr. Huntingdon's family "outside the fold." Many prayers had been, and were constantly offered for her. Every member of the family had in various ways kindly mentioned the subject to her, and "besought her to be reconciled," but she evaded all entreaties with, "Go thy way now," "I will attend to it by-and-by." Never, however, did she feel so deeply as the day when Edward was received into the church. She felt then that she was indeed alone, forever separated from the rest of her family; and her heart ached keenly as she passed down the aisle, before the Communion season, and wended her way home—entered alone the quiet home so oppressingly still this Sabbath evening. The Holy Spirit was calling her loudly to "Come to Christ," but to stifle His calls she took up a book of light reading, and thus grieved, the gentle Spirit turned away.

The chief object of interest, as summer approached, was Louise, who still remained steadfast to Mr. Kemp. And now, as he found it necessary for him to be absent in Europe for the next two

years, he desired to make Louise his wife, that she might accompany him. Gladly would her father have retained her with him these two years, but she was so determined and anxious to accede to Mr. Kemp's proposal, that Mr. Huntingdon thought it best to consent, and in just about one year after she had met Mr. Kemp, she became his wife. "She had married very brilliantly," the world said, and many a gay young girl looked at her and her splendid surroundings with envy.

But Mr. Huntingdon only sighed as he bade the bride "farewell;" and, as he watched the steamer out of sight, which bore her from the restraints of home, out on the broad gulf of Parisian life, his heart sank within him, and he said to himself again and again, "Oh! Louise, Louise, God only can keep thee now. Into His hands I commit thee."

CHAPTER XXII.

PASS we now over some two years or more, and on one evening in the early part of September we will again glance into Easy Hall. Entering the parlor, we find Mrs. Livingston and Margaret seated on the sofa, listening to the evening paper, which Edward Huntingdon is reading. In the corner, seated by an end window, is Mr. Huntingdon, holding lovingly in his arms a tiny little girl fast asleep.

Just now, as Edward ceases reading, Mrs. Livingston says, "Brother, hadn't Georgie better go up-stairs now; it's an half hour past her bedtime."

"Little one, little one," said Mr. Huntingdon, shaking gently the tiny form, "do you hear that? Auntie says it is time for you to go up-stairs to Mary."

"Oh! I's so tired," says the little one; and then, languidly turning her head about, she rested her large, black eyes on Mrs. Livingston, saying, "Where's Mary?"

Ah! those eyes are strangely familiar to us.

Yes ; they are the very counterpart of Georgie's, Mrs. Saybrook's, and this little one is hers ; but she—is sleeping—never more to waken to its tender caresses and loving words.

One day, some months since, Mr. Huntingdon received a letter from her, penned by a friend, begging him to come and see her before she died, which would not be long, as her physician said. She had not written to them for a long time previous to this ; and although they had written to her many times, they had failed to obtain any answer, so that they were not entirely unprepared at receiving adverse news concerning her. No mention was made of her husband in her letter, but there was such a despairing tone in it that Mr. Huntingdon and Mrs. Livingston felt assured that all was not well with her in this respect.

With sad hearts they set out immediately on their journey, for Mrs. Livingston had decided to accompany Mr. H., feeling that she would be needed. Their destination was a small town in Ohio, and in the outskirts of it, in a very small but neat cottage, they found Georgie, though only a faint semblance of her former self.

“ Oh ! this is too kind ! ” said she, as they entered her sick room. Covering her eyes with one wasted hand, while the tears trickled through the thin fingers, she extended the other to them.

Mr. Huntingdon could not restrain his tears, as he tenderly took the little hand and marked how it was wasted. A tear falling upon it started Georgie, and taking her other hand from her eyes, she looked up with a soul-full glance of penitence and earnestness, and murmured, "Oh! uncle, forgive me, forgive me. I wanted to ask your forgiveness when I wrote to you. I saw my error, but my proud heart rebelled against confessing it. You do forgive me, don't you?"

"Dear child, you have been forgiven long ago," said he tremulously, while he bowed his head and kissed the pale white forehead.

"Thank God!" said she, "and Mrs. Livingston, you forgive me, too, for all?"

"Certainly, dear one," replied Mrs. L., sealing her assurance, too, with a fond caress.

"Now I can die content," returned Georgie, closing her eyes and folding her hands on her bosom; but she only rested thus a moment or two, for a violent attack of coughing commenced, succeeded by perfect exhaustion.

During this time, Mr. Huntingdon ascertained from her nurse that Georgie's husband was away, and had been gone some six months, and that her child, a little girl of two years, was now staying with the physician who attended her. In speaking of her husband, she spoke with that careful,

hesitating manner which could not fail to arouse suspicion, both in Mr. Huntingdon's and Mrs. Livingston's minds.

Their suspicions were confirmed the next day, when they heard her story from her physician's lips.

"It is at the request of Mrs. Saybrook," said he, "I tell you her history since she left you, which she has confided to me. She feels that she cannot mention it herself, and I think that the effort would be too much for her. She came amongst us directly after her marriage, and has lived here ever since. Her husband at that time was employed as a clerk in a manufacturing establishment in town, and was doing very well. But some six months after their marriage, he began to take intoxicating drinks again, which he had, I believe, refrained from in a great measure at least, since her marriage. And then — well, you know how it is, he grew worse and worse ; and finally, in about a year after their marriage was discharged from his place for intemperance.

"Mrs. Saybrook's little babe was then scarcely two months old, and the blow fell very heavily upon her. She had some jewels and other valuables which she sold for their maintenance ; and then, as he grew worse and worse, she sold a large portion of her property.

“Finally, in an intoxicated state, he fell and injured his head so severely, that he has been hopelessly insane ever since. He is now in the asylum at T——, in a very low condition. Soon after, she was taken sick, worn down with exposure and grief; I became acquainted with her then, and found her in a very destitute condition. I inquired if she had any friends, but she would not, though acknowledging that she had them, give me any clue so that I could find you; but said, ‘she preferred to die first.’ Our family—my wife and daughter—now took her under their care, and in two months, she was quite recovered. Her fine education and lady-like appearance procured for her a situation in one of our schools. She hired about that time this cottage, and has lived here ever since. She resigned her school about three months ago, but should have left it earlier, as all through the winter, she was in ill health, and troubled with a cough; but she would not leave till obliged to. And now, it gives me joy to tell you, that she trusts, last winter, that she became a Christian. My daughter and she have been very intimate lately, and she says, that Mrs. Saybrook feels that her afflictions have been a great blessing to her; the means probably of her becoming a Christian. She seems to be willing, and prepared to die; her only anxieties have been to see you; to

write for forgiveness to her step-father, toward, whom, she says she has entertained very bitter feelings, and to know if you would be willing to give a home to her little girl. The father, of course, if he lives, which is very doubtful, will never be able to provide for it. I offered to take her myself, and her father has written to the same effect, but she desires greatly to have her under your care, Mrs. Livingston."

"She couldn't give me a more welcome present," replied Mrs. Livingston, with deep emotion. "I cannot thank her enough for it."

"It will make her very happy to have you receive it so warmly," replied the physician, rising and glancing out of the window; then he continued, "I am expecting her here every moment, with my daughter."

A few minutes more, and the little one arrived, and both she and the physician's daughter were warmly welcomed by both Mrs. Livingston and Mr. Huntingdon, who could not fail to admire the child's ingenuous, pleasing countenance, as well as her gracefulness of manner.

"What a treasure you will be to me," said Mrs. Livingston, folding her so closely in her arms, as to frighten the timid child, who was, however, soon comforted again.

It was not long before taking her up in her

arms, Mrs. Livingston passed into Georgie's room and said, with a voice full of meaning, "My dear Georgie, what a precious baby you have got!"

"The doctor told you, it is yours, if you want it, did he not?" said Georgie, almost gasping for breath.

"Want it!" replied Mrs. L., "I cannot thank you, nor my heavenly Father enough, for such a treasure."

"I cannot be thankful enough either," said Georgie, "that she has found such a mother. God is too good to me! I thought if uncle came to see me, I should be overjoyed, but then to see you, and have you love my poor baby so much, Oh, I am too happy!" and the weakened frame could hardly check the now fast coming tears.

Mrs. Livingston's kind, soothing tones fell like music on the ear of the weary mother, and ere long, she slept quietly.

The next day, Mr. Huntingdon was obliged to bid "farewell" to Georgie, and return home. Mrs. Livingston remained, however, promising to stay with her, as long as her poor body remained to suffer. Just before Mr. Huntingdon left, Georgie called him to her bed side, and said, with trembling utterance, "Uncle, will you, can you, care for — for him — the father of my child, till he — dies; and oh! that won't be long, he is almost gone

now. He'll soon follow me, and then you will bury him by my side, wont you? Poor, poor husband! the grave will cover all his faults!"

"My dear Georgie," tenderly replied Mr. Huntingdon, "be assured it will be my pleasure to attend to his wants, just as I would to one of my own children. Do not give yourself the slightest uneasiness regarding him, and when all is over, Georgie, he shall sleep by your side, in our quiet church-yard at home."

"At home!" returned Georgie, gazing inquiringly, but still understandingly at her uncle. Then, more assured by his answering, loving glance, she clasped her hands together, and raising her eyes upwards, murmured in touching tones, "Father, I thank Thee. Wilt Thou bless him, Oh, richly, for his kindness to this poor orphan child!" She spoke no more, but reaching out her hand, she took his, and fondly clasping it, still continued in silent prayer. The tears chased one another down Mr. Huntingdon's cheeks, but he brushed them not away. Not for the world would he have disturbed the enraptured one before him, lying there so serenely calm, so unearthly beautiful. She was the first to move. Heavily sighing she opened her eyes, and gazed at first somewhat bewilderingly around; then resting them upon Mr. Huntingdon, a tranquil smile

played over her face, and loosening her grasp of his hand, she tremblingly said, "All is right now, save one thing; will you call Mrs. Livingston?"

Mrs. Livingston immediately entered, in answer to Mr. Huntingdon's summons, and passing to Georgie, said, "What is it, darling?"

"Will you get my keys, and go to my black trunk, and in a little white box which you will see, take out my ambrotype and bring it to me?"

"Uncle," said Georgie, "I want you to give this picture — handing it to him — to Edward; tell him that he was the means — in God's hands, of leading me to the precious Saviour. Oh, I meant to have written and told him all about it, — how I never could forget his letter, and how much good it did me. But I put it off, thinking I should be better able to write it; but Oh! that time has never come; you must tell him all, — I had this picture taken purposely for him — I wanted him to have a new remembrance of me. You will give my Georgie a copy of this, I know — and — and — send one to her father, too; and tell him I hope to meet him in heaven."

Georgie's messages to Mr. Huntingdon were now all given; and exhausted, she could say no more to him, until he was about to leave; then controlling herself as much as possible, she murmured, "Good-bye, uncle — we shall meet above —

I shall find father, mother, and aunt Margaret, too — we shall be waiting for you — you and all — all — ”

As Georgie touched that silent chord, Mr. Huntingdon turned pale and his lips quivered, but he smiled on her — a longing smile — and then, taking one long, last caress, he passed sadly, quietly away.

Georgie swooned as he left her, and for two days, she lay at “Death’s door,” then she rallied somewhat again, and for a few days was considerably easier. On one of these days she called Mrs. Livingston to her, and said, “Mrs. Livingston, I think my end is nearly at hand, and for fear that I may die suddenly, or may become worse, so that I shall not be able to speak, I want to tell you now, what I wish you to say from me to cousin Margaret, Louise and Bessie. Oh! tell them never, never to love any one as I have loved my — my poor husband — I made him an idol — I worshipped him! and Oh! how — has my heavenly Father punished me for it — how was He obliged to tear my very self to pieces — to get this idol out of my heart — I am glad that He has done it, but Oh! beseech them never to love any one thus. Tell them to be careful; they may be doing it, and not be aware of it, — I was n’t at first. Give Louise my Bible, and tell

her she has had my most earnest prayers — next to my husband and child. Oh ! I hope God will make my death a blessing to her ; it may be that He will use me thus, Mrs. Livingston ; I wish I could be the means of saving one soul."

Here a violent attack of coughing interrupted her ; and as she herself feared, she grew worse and worse each succeeding day, becoming unable to speak, save in short sentences, till finally there dawned a day, whose close found her—freed from bodily pain — from spiritual conflict — a disembodied spirit, wandering with "loved ones" in the golden streets of Paradise.

A few days afterward, Mrs. Livingston, the forever silent mother, and the little motherless one, returned to Easy Hall.

Just across the water, over on the hillside, Georgie sleeps quietly — sleeps by the side of her husband, whom Death beckoned away only a few short weeks after her departure.

The path leading to their graves is well worn. Hither Bessie, with the little Georgie, has often come to mourn during the past summer, — come, until she was called away to mourn even more deeply for a while.

She is not at Easy Hall at present. Did you not miss her bright, beaming face in the family circle ? Just now in a distant city, she sits quiet-

ly watching an invalid as he sleeps ; sometimes moving gently backward and forward the fan she holds in her hand ; sometimes tenderly laying back the stray locks of hair which fall over the sick man's forehead. It is Mr. Belmont, although so changed. Bessie is very pale, too ; but how angelic her countenance. Sorrow has done its work in her heart. She told Mrs. Livingston all the tale some days since, and thus she wrote :

DEAR AUNTY-MOTHER, —

Mr. Belmont has just gone to sleep, and so I joyfully take this opportunity to open my "full heart" to you. Oh ! I do trust to write this time a letter — and a long one, too — instead of one of the little notes you have so long and patiently received.

Aunty, I never can express to you how much I have longed for your presence and comfort during these "trial weeks." Sometimes when I have felt that I must tell some one my heart, I have almost started to go to you, thinking you *were* near, and I should find you somewhere ; then the reality pressed heavily upon me, "I had no one but Jesus ; and so day after day He has not only heard my griefs, but borne them for me, so that I have been a wonder to myself. I have thus learned to cast all my care on Him ; and aunty dear, oh, it's much sweeter than telling you of it ! I rejoice in this experience, for I do so desire, to have Christ *all* to me ; and sometimes when at home I found your comfort so sweet, I used to feel sadly, that when I went to Jesus, it was not so sweet. I felt it was not right, and grieved over it ; I knew the comfort you gave me was divine, and I received it as such, but don't you think it's more precious to drink from the Fountain itself, than

from one of the rivulets. There, aunty, I commenced to tell you of my trials — no, blessings, but my heart is so full of Christ, and the precious lessons He has taught me here, it seems as if I could not speak of anything else.

Oh! I never can tell you how deeply, bitterly sorrowful was the first night after my arrival here. I had not imagined Harry so dangerously sick as I found him; and as I sat and gazed upon my heart's best earthly treasure, moaning and tossing under the delirious fever, and I not able to afford him one single mite of comfort, my heart groaned within me. I heard, too, the physician's low words to the nurse, saying, "He is very sick, be extremely cautious." I begged the privilege of sitting beside him that night, but Oh! how cold and heartless seemed to me the refusal, though it was given in the kindest manner possible. I went to my room; but not to sleep; no, alone I could weep and weep, there was no one near that it could trouble now. And now, dear aunty, came the severest trial of all; for then when my heart was so sore, and I was all alone, no human comforter near, did the tempter appear, and with such frightful temptations, I felt that they must crush me. I actually ran, it seemed to me, to God, "my high tower, my fortress and deliverer." Satan whispered again and again, "Ah! you have made him an idol, and now God is going to take him away." My heart kept answering, "Thy will be done," and it was all I could say. "You only say that," said Satan, "because you think God will spare his life if you are submissive." I groaned, and thought perhaps it is so; and as I thought of him, cold and silent, forever parted from me, my anguish grew intensely deep, and I moaned aloud from the depths of my soul, "My Father, the cross is very heavy! Help Thou me, or I shall utterly fall." It seemed to me then, a strong arm was put directly beneath me, and I could "smile on

Satan's rage," and whispered again, while I gazed confidently up to my Supporter, "Thy will be done." I knew, aunty, afterward, it was all a temptation, for I have never dared to love Mr. Belmont as it seemed to me I could, for fear he should in the least rob my precious Saviour, of the love due to Him, and I knew it was from my heart, I said "Thy will be done." My Supporter and Comforter never left me after that dark night, and on Him I leaned—leaned heavily all the sad waiting days that followed. My calmness was a mystery to some of the family, and you can imagine how painful to me was the remark that I overheard a cousin of Mr. Belmont's make, "That Miss Huntingdon didn't seem to feel very badly." Oh! how little she knew of my heart, or the strange mysterious power which upheld me. For a few moments, the remark stung me keenly, but when I thought how often our Saviour was misunderstood, I was content to suffer once as He did—to be misunderstood on the matter most precious to my very being.

'Twas only a day or two after, however, that I was righted; for in company with this cousin, Mr. Belmont's father said cheerfully, to me, "Bessie, you are a wonder to me, and to the doctor, too; he says you are the bravest little nurse he ever saw. You don't know how much your hopeful face keeps me up."

"My Father keeps me," replied I, "else I should have utterly fallen the first night I came here."

"That's right," replied he, patting my head, "always trust thus in Him and you will be sustained."

I think I read correctly the expression of Miss Donald's cousin's face, and it assured me, that she felt she had misjudged me.

The next day Harry was pronounced better. "The crisis has passed," said the doctor, "and he will recover." It

did not comfort me, as it did the rest, however ; for from the first day after that severe night of trial, I was assured that he would not die, that the Master was only purifying us a little more for our life work, and that he would be spared.

During this time, Mr. Leslie called a number of times, and brought, as he always does, "sweet consolation." On one of these occasions he gave me these sweet verses, which I will copy for you.

BEARING THE CROSS.

[*From the German of Schmolk.*]

"The heavier cross, the nearer heaven ;
 No cross without, no God within,
 Death, Judgment, from the heart are driven
 Amidst the world's false glare and din.
 O ! happy he, with all his loss,
 Whom God hath set beneath the cross !

The heavier cross the better Christian, —
 This is the touchstone God applies ;
 How many a garden would lie wasting,
 Unwet by showers from weeping eyes !
 The gold by fire is purified ;
 The Christian is by trouble, tried.

The heavier cross, the stronger faith :
 The loaded palm strikes deeper root ;
 The wine juice sweetly issueth
 When men have pressed the clustered fruit.
 And courage grows where dangers come,
 Like pearls beneath the salt sea foam.

The heavier cross, the heartier prayer ;
 The bruised herbs most fragrant are ;
 If wind and sky were always fair,
 The sailor would not watch the star ;
 And David's psalms had ne'er been sung,
 If grief his heart had never wrung.

The heavier cross, the more aspiring,
From vales we climb to mountain's crest.
The pilgrim of the desert tiring,
Longs for the Canaan of his rest.
The dove has here no rest in sight,
And to the ark she wings her flight.

The heavier cross, the easier dying;
Death is a friendlier face to see,
To life's decay one bids defying,
From life's distress one then is free.
The cross sublimely lifts our faith
To him who triumphed over death.

Thou crucified ! The cross I carry —
The longer may it dearer be;
And, lest I faint while here I tarry,
Implant thou such a heart in me,
That faith, hope, love may flourish there,
Till for my cross the crown I wear !”

Are they not exceedingly sweet and touching? I have read them to Mr. Belmont many times, since he has been able to hear me read, and he enjoys them very much. He calls me now, and I must bid you adieu till by and by.

THURSDAY MORNING.

I hope to complete this at this sitting. Harry has gone to ride with his father, and he seems to be improving fast. The day I wrote you before, we had quite a long talk, and we spoke about God's design in all this affliction. Said Harry, “Bessie, I see it all. You can hardly imagine how intensely occupied I became with my studies just before I was taken sick. I gave all my time to them, rising up early and sitting up late. I fear, also, I rather infringed on my devotional time —if I did not, my mind was so occupied with other things,

that they were attended to in rather a careless manner. My mind dwelt entirely on my graduation, and to please you and my friends by a worthy one was—I see it now—my constant and highest aim. Ah! the Lord saw all this, my unholy desire to please men, and laid me low. ‘Blessed be His holy name.’ At first, when I felt the disease coming upon me, it was deathly hard to submit, but He who alone could do it, broke me down and I yielded, though I wept like a child. Truly, He leadeth us in a way we know not,”

As Harry was saying this, it was suddenly revealed to me, just the lesson I had to learn; about the same as his, for all during July my heart was full of his graduation, and I went through the scene over and over again in imagination, just how he would appear. Ah! *that* was “the little fox that spoiled the vines.” I am *so* glad our Father did it! I cannot praise Him enough for it. Does He not lead us sweetly, and chastise us just exactly as we need? Neither Harry nor I would have thought that we needed pruning just there, but the Master knew, and tenderly He put the knife on these branches. You do not know how much comfort I do take because I am so assured He is leading us; it is so delightful to feel that He careth for us, just like an earthly parent, only infinitely more tender, more wise! You know I always loved to be taken care of. But there, I must not write another word to-day. I promise myself, however, this pleasure again very soon.

With love and kind wishes to all,

I remain ever yours,

BESSIE.

B——, Sept. 7, 18—.

Good morning, Auntie dear. Harry is asleep again, and so I can talk to you awhile. I believe I like to write letters full as well as to talk, though perhaps it is because I am so selfish, and can tell all about myself without being inter-

rupted, or obliged to listen to the affairs of others, before I have concluded mine own. I have thought so sometimes ; so now-a-days I make it not only a point of courtesy but principle to write fully and interestedly about my correspondents' "affairs" before I mention my own ; and if there is any cramping done anywhere, it shall be on my side—not on theirs. Oh ! this self, how it protrudes everywhere, and what an amount of crushing it needs ! I do not need, however, to do this when I write to you, as our correspondence is only for *my* benefit, though I know "Bessie's letters" do give you some pleasure.

Harry gains every day. As Edward probably told you, he accepted with great pleasure your invitation, and you may expect us about the 20th of this month. Oh, I do long to see home again, and the "home ones" ! It seems a long, long time since I left you, probably because I have passed through so much during the time. Yes, I may well say much—much of affliction, experience, conflict, temptation ; but much of joy in the Holy Ghost also. He has been "taking of the things of Christ, and showing them unto me," very preciouslly during the last week. Harry and I have been reading Hebrews together ; and Oh ! how has He shown me my utter nothingness, aside from Christ, and my unworthiness to come into the presence of the Holy God, save through Christ's mediation. I cannot approach unto God as I used too, and pray, closing with "for Christ's sake ;" but I feel I must commence with that, else my prayer cannot ascend. You understand me ; I want that thought to precede the prayer, rather than to close it.

I wish I could begin to tell you the "blessed teachings" the Master has taught me since I left you. What am I, that thus He should care for me, and come and abide all the time in my little heart ? I never am alone, for He is with me, and my thoughts turn directly to Him, when friends are away,

and often when they are present. Don't you think we can easily find out how we regard any one, by watching our thoughts, and is it not comforting to think that our Father will "bring even our thoughts into subjection." He is bringing mine more and more. I often feel a power checking unholy thoughts, just as they are coming, it seems to me.

Another thing which has seemed very precious lately to me, is that God will use us poor mortals to work for him. You do not know how thrilled I am with pleasure when I find He really has used me, and I often find it to be the times when I am the least expecting it—thus setting aside my will and my pleasure even, in *doing* His work. Ah! how constantly is He obliged to "set aside *our* wills;" answering our prayers, but not exactly as we *willed* them to be answered; giving us work, but not just where *we* thought we could labor with much success; pruning us, but not in the place we expected. Thus it is we die to self, and live only in Him.

Oh! Aunt, how much misunderstanding there is in this world; it seems to be the root of a great deal of trouble that exists, and especially the root of so much differing between Christians. I see it so constantly amongst them here. Oh! it makes my heart very sad at times! It seems to me they do agree upon the vital points, but some minor matter—a term, perhaps—prevents their seeing even this agreement, and also besides, it prevents their progress heavenward. Oh! for charity, charity. Don't you believe, if Christians would make it an *earnest* subject of prayer, that their hearts might be filled with Christ's love? then "differings" would cease, cease at least in expression, for we shall not, shall we, all *fully* agree till we stand where "we shall know, even as also we are known?"

I must tell you before I close, a remark I heard yesterday about Margaret. It especially pleased me, because I felt Christ was honored by it. Mrs. Dayton called here yester-

day, and as we were speaking of home affairs, she said, "By the way, I met your sister Margaret at my cousin's last week, and I never saw such a change in anybody as in her. Why, if religion would do as much for me, I would become a Christian right off." This remark recalled one Margaret made to me last summer, that "she was such a crooked old tree, that grace would abound more in her than in the graceful elms and maples she had perhaps envied a little." I think Mrs. Dayton's remark proves that grace does abound in her. I'm sure she's anything but a "crooked tree" to me—no-ble, self-denying sister. Is it wrong for me to be proud that she is my sister? I'm sure it's only because I feel it such an honor to have a sister in whom Christ dwells so richly. Oh! I do so ardently desire for you all to be filled with Christ more and more, and not only you, but myself and all the world. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven," is one of my most fervent prayers.

And now, aunty, I must close. I hope you will not be weary reading my long letters. Soon I shall be home to talk with you. By the way, I suppose from what Edward says, Louise will get home about the same time that I do. How sad Bell Rivers' death was. It seems to have affected Louise very much, judging from her letter. Poor sister! European life has evidently failed to satisfy her. Oh! that she may yet find Christ, the only satisfying portion.

Love, love to everybody.

Your own

BESSIE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IT was at the close of a beautiful autumn day in early October, that Bessie Huntingdon entered the library at Easy Hall, and cheerily said to the company assembled there, "Come, good people, you don't begin to know how charming it is out to-day. You have talked enough about Europe for the present, and now I propose that we take a general ramble round the village; perhaps Louise would like to see the improvements."

"O, yes," replied Margaret, "it's just the best time of day for Louise to see the church; that is if she feels able to take the walk."

"Yes," replied Louise, slowly rising and smoothing back the folds of her magnificent silk, "Yes, I should like to go. I didn't notice much yesterday when we came into town, I was so tired and felt so dizzy after the voyage. What shall I wear, Bessie?"

"O, anything," returned she, "your little hat."

They were soon equipped, and started off, a party of four; Bessie and Mr. Belmont — now,

quite recovered from his illness—leading the way and Margaret and Louise following.

“So, Margaret, the church is your hobby,” said Louise, as they were passing down the avenue.

“Yes, I suppose it is,” replied Margaret, “and I don’t wonder at it, for it has been my chief object of thought and labor during your absence. Look! there it is.”

“Where?” returned Louise, glancing in the direction of Margaret’s pointed finger.

“Why, don’t you see the spire, and the building among the trees, just across the harbor there?”

“O, yes!” replied Louise, “how pretty it looks, and what an excellent location for it! Why, it’s at the fork of the B—— and T—— roads, is it not?”

“Yes,” replied Margaret. “You know there was a small, unoccupied piece of ground there, owned by Mr. Tiverton, and when we first mentioned building a church, many spoke of that place, but I did not fancy it at first; I wanted it in a more secluded place—on the hill-side opposite, for instance, or the road leading from our avenue to the harbor. I had selected two spots, and quite set my heart upon them, but father and Mrs. Livingston, and all, thought the place in which it is now located would be decidedly the best; and so I yielded the point, and have been very glad since that I did,

for I think the village people enjoy it more, having it right amongst them, and then I do not doubt it will exert a much greater influence in its present position ; and the greatest good of all, I suppose, is what we ought to consult in such matters.

“ I believe you are the principal owner of it, are you not ? ” returned Louise.

“ Owner ! why, what do you mean ? ” replied Margaret ; “ the church belongs to the village.”

“ Well, you know what I mean—you have given the most towards building it.”

“ I gave my book,” replied Margaret, “ to the Lord, and promised Him all that I received from it should go towards the church ; and He blessed me more than I had even dared to hope ; but many others—father, Edward, Mr. Belmont, Aunt Livingston and the village people, have contributed towards it. Mr. Tiverton himself gave the land.”

“ Is it possible ? ” responded Louise, “ why, I thought he was too close to give even a dollar for charitable purposes, much less a piece of land like that.”

“ Well, Bessie succeeded in getting it, some way—you know she’s a great beggar—and I do not know of any person who has been more interested in it since. He says he intends to take a pew ; not that he expects to come very often himself, but then it will be handy for visitors staying

with them ; but I have great hopes of him, and feel that he will yet be one of the Lord's people."

And now they turned a corner, so that the neat wooden church was perfectly visible to them. Mr. Belmont and Bessie came back to them, and Bessie said eagerly, "Well, Louise, how do you like our church?"

"It is very neat and simple," replied she, "just the building for the spot and village. Who designed it?"

"The young lady at your right," replied Bessie.

"Oh! Bessie," returned Margaret, chidingly, "don't say that, for I studied architecture for a whole year, and stole this and that idea from various buildings, and then from my rude conceptions, Mr. Black, our village carpenter, designed the building."

"Well, I should think," responded Louise, "pretty much of the credit of it belonged to you. By the way, when will it be finished?"

"In a month or two," replied Margaret; "we hope to dedicate it this winter."

"What are you going to have for a fence?" continued Louise, as they now passed on to the enclosure of the church.

"We have not quite decided yet. We really want a better one than our funds will permit just now. You see there is quite a piece to be enclosed."

"Margaret, let me furnish that," whispered Louise. "You shall have one to your satisfaction."

"O, Louise, you are too kind!" replied Margaret; "It was more than I expected from you."

"Why so?" returned Louise.

"Well, I suppose it's because you are not interested in such things."

"Interested in such, Margaret, as much as in any. Life is not so very beautiful to me, after all," and she smiled so sadly and drearily, that Margaret's heart was deeply touched.

"What a dear little church!" continued Louise as she entered the inside, "and 'oak finish' too; O, I always liked that for the country! There, I know I shall love to come here, it is so pleasant, if you have a good minister! Have you thought of any one yet?"

Margaret colored, and said in a very low tone of voice, "Yes, I will tell you about it by-and-by. Mr. Belmont is going to preach for us next Sunday."

After examining the various parts of the church, they retraced their steps, and silently wended their way up to the cemetery, where they quietly gathered round the graves of Georgie and her husband.

"Oh! Georgie," sobbed Louise, as she rested

her head against the tombstone, "why did you go first?"

"She was all ready to go," returned Bessie, hardly conscious of what she was saying.

"Yes," continued Louise, "it was better," and the same dreary smile passed over her face that Margaret observed in the church. They returned home more silent and sad than they went. Little Georgie met them at the door, and the mother spoke through the soul-full eyes of her little one, saying, "Come to Christ, weary one; come to Him and find rest." Snatching up the child, Louise kissed her again and again, and sadly said to Margaret, "Oh! Margaret, if I only had such a child, I should have something to live for. Why didn't Georgie give it to me?"

"Why didn't Georgie give it to me!" with its longing accent, rang and rang in Margaret's ears through the long night, till she could endure its pleadings no longer, and in the morning she sought Mrs. Livingston, and with weeping eyes said, "Dear aunt, have you noticed how very sad and unhappy Louise seems to be? What can be the matter with her? Mr. Kemp is very kind to her, she says, and they seem to be happy together, but she speaks so drearily to me sometimes, it seems as if my heart would break for her. Have you noticed it?"

“Only too well,” returned Mrs. Livingston, “your father and I were speaking of it last night, and it weighs heavily upon him. He said to me, ‘Oh! sister, what would I give to see Louise contented and cheerful like her sisters.’ Poor woman! with all the happiness that money can afford, she seems wretched indeed. We can only pray for her now, Margaret, that God would open her eyes to true happiness.”

“Don’t you think she would be happier if she had children?” continued Margaret.

“O, yes,” returned Mrs. Livingston, “I wish she had one.”

“I spoke of that, responded Margaret, on account of a remark she made to me yesterday. When we came back from our walk, little Georgie met us, and Louise caught her right up in her arms, and kissing her again and again, said in such a pleading, aching tone, I have not forgotten it since, ‘Oh! Margaret, if I only had such a child, I should have something to live for. Why didn’t Georgie give it to me?’”

A shade of anxiety and sorrow passed over Mrs. Livingston’s face, but she only replied, thoughtfully, “Did she?”

Mrs. Livingston was thoughtful and prayerful all that day; then at night she sought Louise, and after some general conversation, said tenderly,

"Louise, you don't seem to be happy. Are you sick? or is it lonely here for you?"

"Oh! aunt, neither of those," returned Louise, "but please don't ask me, for I know it is very wicked for me to feel so, with such a good husband and everything that heart can wish, but I can't help it. I am unhappy all the time, and sometimes I almost wish I could die; I feel so wretchedly, especially since Bell Rivers died. Oh! I wish I had never seen her! I couldn't refuse, however, to go to her, as her father said she was constantly calling for me. I have not mentioned it to any one before, save Edward; I could not. It affects me so much, I dread to speak of it! Her death was very, very sad. Oh! how she begged of us to do something more for her! to save her life, and then she would call on Edward so piteously, 'to come to her; he had promised he would, and perhaps he could save her.' There was a minister present, but he could not comfort her in the least. She kept telling him 'it was too late! too late! God wouldn't forgive her; she had refused Him too many times.' She blamed her father, and said 'he was the cause of her unhappiness; that she might have become a Christian, and now been prepared to die, if he had not persuaded her to give up Edward; that she never loved any one else.' You know she gave up that

young man who waited upon her after Edward, just before she came to Paris. Her father was in perfect agony the whole time. Oh ! how I pitied him ! but I did not stay with her long, for it was too much for me. I fainted away, and was carried from the room, and Mr. Kemp would not let me return. I heard she continued, in just such a state till her death. How horrible it was to die so ! Poor, poor Bell !—how Edward wept yesterday when I told him of it. I don't know what he would have done had he seen and heard her. I wish I never had. I can never forget it, and at nights I often get so frightened over it, Oh ! I wish I was at peace !

“ Louise,” replied Mrs. L., “ you can have peace. There is One who can give it to you ; will you not seek Him ? ”

“ Dear aunt, will you believe it ? gay and giddy as you may have thought I have been in Paris, I have been seeking Him. O, how many times have I thought of you all praying for me, and sometimes it seemed as if the very thoughts of so many prayers ascending for me, would crush me to the very earth, and then I would try so hard to find Christ.”

“ And could n't you find Him ? ” replied Mrs. L.

“ Not as I wish to,” returned Louise ; and then

confidingly she told Mrs. Livingston all her heart. Mrs. Livingston soon saw the "block" she was stumbling over, and said, "Louise, 'Yet lackest thou one thing; sell all thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.'"

"Oh! aunt Livingston, I never can work for the poor, as Margaret and you and Bessie do in the world. I never could go near a poor person, so much dirt and distress, I could n't endure it! And then I don't know why I need give so much money to them, I don't have much to give anyway; it takes nearly all Mr. Kemp gives me, to purchase my clothes."

"Oh! Louise," replied Mrs. L., "'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.' 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' No, Louise, would you know Christ and the peace His love affords you, you must give up *all* to Him, and be willing to take up the cross and be led just as He pleases."

"What! and dress as plainly as you and Margaret and Bessie do?" returned Louise.

"What does the apostle say about that?" replied Mrs. L., "about the dress of Christian women. If it were not important, and he did not think, that they must dress differently from the world's people, he would not have referred to it.

He says, ‘ whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of *plaiting the hair*, and of *wearing of gold*, or of *putting on of apparel*. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a weak and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price.’ Is not the direction plain ? ”

“ It seems to be,” replied Louise, “ but, dear me ! how few Christians follow it. Why, just look round at Mr. Leslie’s some Sabbath, and mark how much jewelry and finery, one can see. I never had a taste for wearing such things to church, and I have often wondered, how people of any taste could dress for church, almost the same as for a party. Why, there is Miss Steele, she always dressed gayly and conspicuously, and I don’t see as she has changed her dress at all since she joined the church. I have heard it said, she was quite a devoted Christian ; so you see one may dress a great deal and yet be a Christian.”

“ I doubt,” replied Mrs. Livingston, “ whether Miss Steele’s attention has ever been directed to the subject of dress. Her mother is one of those persons who think ‘ tasty dress ’ is all important, and she has trained her daughters in the same manner, and I presume Miss Steele would hardly think now, she dresses too much. I believe, however, she is a sincere Christian ; and as I have

watched her laboring for the Master here and there, how have I longed to tell her how her dress hinders her usefulness. I believe, I am quite assured, if she could hear some of the remarks which are made concerning her, she would modify it considerably ; feeling, like Paul, ‘ Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth,’ or, ‘ It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.’ And then, too, Miss Steele is a young lady of so much influence in the church, I desire to have that influence all tell for the precious cause. By her present manner of dressing, she sets a bad example to the world who can well say, ‘ how do ye differ from us ;’ to poorer Christians who look up to her as a standard, and endeavor to conform to her fashions ; to the poor, to whom perhaps, she ministers, who feel, ‘ how can you dress so richly, when so many poor people are hungering for bread around you, which you might give to them.’ Ah ! Louise, there is a greater responsibility here, than many of God’s people imagine. One thing, however, I have observed, the nearer a soul gets to Christ, the more these outside adornings disappear. I remember now, a young lady friend of mine who said to me soon after she joined the church,

‘Lizzie, I don’t know whether I am getting too particular, but I can’t spend so much time embroidering and trimming my clothes as I used to. I can’t bear to wear my blue silk with so many flounces either, when I remember the precious time it took to make them, which I might have spent, tract distributing, visiting the sick, or in some other good work. No, I can’t do such things now, and feel my Saviour is smiling upon me. Another thing, you know, how I always used to braid my hair, Sundays, and all, those wide braids which took me so long, — well, last Sunday, as I was braiding them, the thoughts came to me, How much time you spend over this poor perishing body, how much have you given your soul to-day? Wouldn’t it be better to spend the remainder of your time before church, preparing your soul for divine service, than thus to be beautifying your body? Do you need to adorn yourself thus to go into the Lord’s house? to worship at *His* altar? Who are you desiring to please, Him, or the world? and, Lizzie, I could braid no more. I brushed my hair back neatly, and flew to my closet and to my Bible, and oh, I can’t begin to tell you what a precious season I had with my Saviour, and how much I enjoyed the service that morning at church?’”

“But could n’t she have done both?” replied Louise. “I’m sure, there was no harm in her making herself look pleasing to her friends.”

“She desired more the ‘*inward* adorning,’” responded Mrs. Livingston, “and she saw that to gain this, the time was not to be wasted on outside adornings. It did not render her less pleasing, to sensible people to see her hair plain. Indeed, from this time she was more anxious to be pleasing to her friends, and the world, than she ever was before, but to please them for ‘their edification,’ by kind words, looks and actions. Her dress was as a Christian’s should always be — neat, in good taste, and according to her circumstances; she never was ashamed, or proud of it. There is Louise, a propriety in all things, and there is nothing which concerns our daily life, but what we can carry to our Father and ask for His guidance concerning it. I make my dress just as much a subject of prayer as anything else, and you can do the same.”

“But, aunt, it don’t seem so important to me, it’s a little thing after all.”

“So little,” replied Mrs. Livingston, thoughtfully, “that you are willing to peril your soul rather than to give it up.”

Louise was silent for a few moments, and then she said, “No, it is not a little thing after all; it

is really all I live for. How could I be happy without it?"

"You cannot be happy until you do relinquish it," replied Mrs. L., "for it is your 'idol,' and as I have said, 'ye cannot serve God and mammon;' you must 'Set your affections on things above,' before you can find any true peace."

Louise made no reply, and they were silent awhile, then Mrs. Livingston said, "Louise, I have not yet told you, my true reason for coming in here this evening. Margaret mentioned to me this morning, that you have said, you wished 'Georgie had given little Georgie to you,' now—"

"Oh! aunt Livingston," interrupted Louise, "how could Margaret tell you that? I didn't mean anything. Little Georgie is so sweet, I could n't help wishing it just then. I am glad she did n't give her to me. I could n't begin to bring her up aright."

"But, Louise," continued Mrs. Livingston, "I have been thinking and praying about it all day, and seeing how lonely you seem to be, I have thought best to loan her to you for a while, that is, if you thought you would be willing to return her to me when I desired. I should wish also to pass three or four months with her during the year. You could come up here, and I would visit you, so that she would not forget me. Then

I should desire to have her dress and food very plain, and that you should teach and tell her about the God who made her. I feel, Louise, that I have her soul to answer for, and God forbid that I should peril it in any way."

"Oh! aunt Livingston," returned Louise, brushing away the coming tears, "how can I thank you enough for this kind news. Indeed I will be faithful, and do with her just as you would, but how can you be willing to part with her?"

"It was only through much supplication, Louise, I gained the willing mind. I can well afford though to part with her, for a while, if she will take your heart from worldly things, and lead you from loving the creature, to the love of the Creator."

Thus little Georgie passed into Louise's hands, and all felt how nobly and wisely Mrs. Livingston had done, as they saw Louise gifted with new energy and life. No one was more pleased than Mr. Kemp, and little Georgie was in more danger from being spoiled in his hands, than in Louise's, for she could not forget how sacred was the charge committed to her.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IT was not many days after, when Mr. Belmont entered hurriedly one morning into the house, and beckoning to Bessie, who was in the dining-room assisting Mrs. Livingston, he led the way into the library. He closed the door carefully, and then seating himself and Bessie on a lounge, he drew from his pocket a letter and bade her read it. She glanced at the outside, and opening it, found it was an offer of the pastorship of the "new church." She read only a few lines before she said, "O, how rejoiced I am! You will accept it, wont you? How good the Lord is to us; truly our cup is overflowing."

"Yes, indeed," replied Mr. Belmont. "I don't think I could have received an offer more agreeable or desirable. I have always desired to be located in the country rather than in the city, and here is such a good field to work, and so much to be done, Bessie, we shall have to be 'busy bees.'"

"I'm all ready," replied Bessie, "you know I love to be 'busy' — busy for the Lord. I do not think there is anything for which I render to my Maker more hearty thanks, than this love I have

for 'work.' Oh! I do pity, naturally indolent people who have to rouse themselves to labor."

"Well, you will have work enough," replied Mr. Belmont, "and by the way, Bessie, how fortunate we are called here; you wont be afraid to be a minister's wife now, with the 'home ones,' will you?" and bending his face down to gaze into hers, he smilingly awaited her reply.

"I don't know about that," replied Bessie, glancing up archly, "just think how staid I must be, to be minister's wife to my father and aunt Livingston. Well, I shan't fear them, I guess. And now I think more of it," continued she, after a slight pause, "how good it is of the Lord, that He has called us here, for aunty can correct me when I err, and I shall have her counsels the same as ever. O, how *just right*, the Lord does lead us! Is n't it good to trust in Him?"

"Yes, Bessie, dear," replied Mr. Belmont, thoughtfully.

A moment or two now passed in silence, then Mr. Belmont said, "Bessie, shall we not render praise to God for this great blessing He has bestowed upon us?"

"Yes," softly responded Bessie, and — meekly, lovingly, they knelt, and from overflowing hearts poured forth sweet praises unto God, then consecrated themselves anew to their "life work."

The offer was in due time formally accepted,

and only a few weeks followed before the church was dedicated, and Mr. Belmont installed.

No one that day was so happy as Margaret, her face fairly radiated with joy, as she saw the completion of her past year's fervent labor, and the silent song of her heart was, "My soul doth magnify the Lord." Mr. Belmont's first sermon as pastor was from the text she gave him,—“Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!”

The winter which followed at Easy Hall was an exceedingly busy one with Mrs. Livingston, Margaret and Bessie. Louise had returned to her city home with little Georgie, but she was very busy also. Scarcely a day passed that she did not send some package by Mr. Huntingdon or Edward to Bessie. As spring opened, too, there was a great deal of passing from Easy Hall to a little cottage, hidden amongst the trees, just across the harbor, on the hill-side. But there came a day when the hurried tripping to the cottage ceased—when the last package was sent and the busy fingers folded themselves quietly, and all was done! The next day, on a beautiful May morning, when the world was bursting into life and beauty, in the little village church, surrounded by joyous friends and happy villagers, were the village pastor and the village pet made one—forever!

CHAPTER XXV.

TIME passed on. The church flourished, and the village pastor and his wife labored in earnest faithfully to cultivate their little vineyard; and they saw the fruits of their labors in the conversion of many souls, and the progress of others in holiness. Margaret Huntingdon was ever at their side, and she proved not only the villagers but the pastor's right-hand helper. Her life was richly full of Christ-like deeds, and though the world saw not its loveliness, angels gazed—as earth's redeemed ones will hereafter—with increasing delight on its richly perfumed pages.

Bessie's place at home was now filled by an orphan stranger—the village school-mistress. Very dear was she to Margaret, but dearer to another.

Edward Livingston still came and went, “diligent in business, serving the Lord”—a happy man, looking eagerly forward to that day which would commence man's truest earthly life, but not forgetting the other, better, purer one, which waiteth him on the other shore.

Only six short months did little Georgie comfort Louise's heart, then the Angel-keeper came and stole her silently away, and sadly, softly they laid

her down upon her loving mother's breast. Her little mission was all accomplished. She saved the soul her mother longed to save, for through blinding tears, Louise vowed forever "to be the Lord's." Two homeless orphans now call her "mamma," and the "Orphans' Home," and other charitable societies, find in her a warm friend and a liberal supporter.

Pleasant are Mr. Huntingdon's day-dreams as he sees all the lambs God gave him, "safely housed in the fold." He passes the long afternoons, after his return from business, sometimes in the little cottage near the harbor, Louise has taken for the summer; sometimes in the parsonage with Bessie and Mr. Belmont; sometimes stopping at the village school to hear the little ones' merry songs, and to bid the school-mistress,—“bring home rosy cheeks, else Edward will frown;” or he turns up the avenue and calls at Easy Hall—for Easy Hall is not his home now. Three months ago, the Huntingdons left, and dwell in the large brown house just beyond Bessie's home,—left, because one summer afternoon a disabled soldier, wounded in the Crimea, came to Easy Hall. He told to a loving, waiting woman a sincere tale of error, repentance, and simple faith in the Lord Jesus, and now in a corner he sits in his arm chair, master at Easy Hall—and Mrs. Livingston is no more alone.

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